INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY

Dev Raj Bali

Dr. Unnikrishnan. P



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PREFACE

Philosophy, which is the pursuit of wisdom, looks at the universe as a harmonious whole unlike the specialised sciences which view it as a collection of parts.

It is not opposed to natural sciences. All great scientists have been philosophers because philosophy deals with the fundamental issues which no true scientist can ignore.

I have made in this book a humble attempt to introduce the subject of philosophy in all its aspects. How far I have been successful is for the readers to judge.

The book is divided into ten chapters. Each chapter is comprehensive in its scope. The first chapter is introductory. The second deals with the nature of metaphysics as a department of philosophy with different metaphysical points of views. In the third chapter epistemological and logical issues have been combined keeping in view the close relation between epistemology and logic. The fourth, fifth and sixth chapters deal with culture and political ideologies which combine ethics and aesthetics. The seventh and eighth chapters would normally be excluded from an introductory book on philosophy. I have deliberately included them because today philosophers cannot afford to sit in an ivory tower unconcerned with cultural and social life. The ninth chapter deals with the philosophy of religion. Apart from a general discussion on the nature and problems of religion, a brief account of different religions is given to make it a comparative study. The last chapter deals with contemporary philosophy, both Western and Indian.

I have drawn inspiration from the great masters like Professor Will Durant. It is not possible to mention the names of all those whose works I have consulted. I acknowledge my indebtedness to all of them. Professor Ali Mohammad Sufi enlightened me on the historical development of Islam as a great religion. I am grateful to him as I am to many other friends who helped and encouraged me in completing the work.

I shall fail in my duty if I do not mention the help received from my wife Vimla. She supported me in many ways. My daughter Jyotsna prepared the bibliography. I am thankful to both of them.

DEV RAJ BALI

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INTRODUCTION

What is Philosophy?

Philosophy is a universally recognised discipline and its history is as old as man's. But today there is widespread indifference towards philosophy and people often declare it to be a useless subject. There was a time when Socrates preferred to die for it. Love of truth and wisdom was considered as the highest virtue. Wisemen were honoured everywhere. But today the situation is different. The prevalent confusion and lack of understanding about the nature and purpose of philosophy and as a subject demands that we make an attempt to put the whole thing in the clearest possible terms, for both students of philosophy and those interested in knowing the subject.

The term philosophy literally means love of wisdom. Hence, a philosopher may be called a lover of wisdom. In the beginning the term philosophy was loosely used by Greek thinkers and it conveyed many things. Pythagoras in 600 B.C. declared himself as philosopher, implying his love for wisdom. Subsequently it was used to denote love of thinking, thinking attitude, reflective attitude towards life. Even today these different uses are relevant. Plato gave a specific and technical meaning to the term. He defined a philosopher as one whose attention is fixed on reality rather than on appearances. A philosopher is interested in grasping the essential nature of things. Thus philosophy was defined as a reflective and reasoned attempt to infer the character and content of the universe taken in its totality. We may say that philosophy is, "a resolute and persistent attempt to understand and appreciate the universe as a whole".

Philosophy is basically an attitude and an activity of the human mind. To have a guiding attitude towards life is to have a philosophy, since the principles which a man consciously or unconsciously adopts determines his thinking and actions in dealing with the practical issues of his existence. The impulse to philosophise is motivated by the desire to adopt for oneself and for others a creed to live by. The aim of such an attempt is to make our lives coherent and purposive.

There is no sense in philosophising unless it affects our attitude to life and its problems. G.K. Chesterton, the noted English writer, said that the most important and practical thing about a man is his attitude towards life and his view of the universe. Thus, it matters whether a man is a pessimist or an optimist, an empiricist or a rationalist, a sceptic or a believer.

Philosophy refers to a way of living and thinking. In this sense every man has a philosophy. A man's way of thinking, his attitude, beliefs and opinions constitute his philosophy. Our happiness, peace of mind and style of living depends upon our way of thinking or the philosophy of our life. In a general sense, when we speak of a man's philosophy, we simply mean the sum of his beliefs. His beliefs refer to all those viewpoints which guide his thinking and actions about life and the world. Different men have different kinds of philosophies. In the words of Fichte, the 19th century German idealist, "the kind of philosophy a man adopts depends on the kind of man he is."

In India, philosophy is traditionally called *Darshana* implying thereby insight into the real nature of things. In Platonic sense, a philosopher or a *darshnik* was a man of wisdom. A wiseman has a clear understanding of the distinction between reality and its appearances. Man is not like other animals. He is a rational being and lives in the organised life of society. He has ideals and purposes besides responsibilities towards others. Therefore, it is essential for him to know the distinction between real and unreal, between right and wrong, between knowledge and opinion. A philosopher is a guide to humanity. He is one who apprehends the essence or reality of the world; the one who is able to grasp the eternal and immutable.

There was a time when philosophy was conceived as the sum total of all knowledge. Now the situation is different, with the development of the various sciences as independent disciplines. But it is quite relevant to think of bringing about a synthesis of the results of all sciences. In this sense, philosophical enquiry is not unwarranted. There is difference between mere knowledge of things and wisdom. Different natural sciences deal with the different aspects of Nature; they are directed towards obtaining a fragmented knowledge of Nature. To that extent sciences have an important role to play. At the same time it may be said that knowledge without wisdom may prove useless or even harmful to mankind. Here wisdom implies a proper understanding of the use of scientific knowledge for the benefit of mankind. This is not possible unless results of the different sciences are synthesised and a synthetic understanding of the whole universe is developed. Thus philosophy cannot be rejected as useless or outdated if we want to combine knowledge with wisdom.

At this point it is necessary to spell out the subject matter of philosophy. What is philosophy constituted of? The history of philosophy shows that philosophers have discussed a great variety of questions. It is very difficult to provide a general description which includes all these questions. However, we can roughly indicate the main questions with which philosophers have been concerned.

To begin with, it seems that the most important and interesting problem with which the philosophers were concerned related to the Nature of the universe. In other words, the problem of providing a general description of the universe in which we live. Different philosophers have responded to this problem differently. The common sense view suggests that in the universe there are material objects in space, and also animals as well as men with conscious behaviour. We can describe the universe by saying that these are the only two kinds of things in the universe, or these are the only kinds known to human mind. Philosophers have not only expressed their opinions as to what there is or is not in the universe, or what we know and what we do not know, but they have also tried to prove their point of view. The Greek philosophers brought to consciousness three problems. What is the place and role of knowledge and reason in the conduct of life? What is the constitution and structure of knowledge and reason by virtue of which they perform their assigned functions? What is the constitution of nature of universe which renders possible the conceptions of knowledge? These questions take us to the different branches of philosophy.

The Branches of Philosophy

A great deal of philosophy has consisted in discussing questions with regard to god, a future life, matter, mind, space and time. All these problems belong to the department of philosophy called metaphysics.

In our ordinary life we consistently assume that there are only a limited number of ways in which it is possible to acquire real knowledge. Philosophers have tried to classify all the different ways in which we can know things. The problems concerning knowledge

belong to the department of philosophy known as epistemology.

Another important branch of philosophy is that of ethics. Philosophers have discussed such problems as the ideal or purpose of life, the norms of right actions and the theories of good and evil.

A complete scheme of the subject matter of philosophy will also include logic, aesthetics, philosophy of religion and psychology. Logic is a branch of philosophy which deals with principles of valid reasoning. It also includes scientific methodology and the fundamental laws which regulate human thinking and reasoning. Philosophical enquiry is directed to the discovery of truth, the knowledge of distinction between true and false. This is not possible if our thinking and reasoning is invalid or full of errors. Thus, logic is an indispensable department of philosophy, as important as metaphysics and epistemology. Aesthetics consists of problems regarding beauty and sublimity. Why is an object called beautiful? To what extent does the sense of appreciation of beauty contribute to the enrichment of human life? These and the similar questions constitute the subject matter of aesthetics. Psychology is like a disloyal child which has recently abondoned its mother philosophy in order to set up a separate home. But it started as an inseparable branch of philosophy. The scientific study of mind and its impact on human behaviour contributes to a great extent in better understanding of human nature. Psychology is particularly related with ethics. Philosophy of religion takes up basic problems like the concept and existence of God, conventional and rational religion, the nature of religious faith, doubt and belief and the role of religion in the evolution of human civilisation. Thus, we see that the subject matter of philosophy covers a wide range of problems related to different aspects of man.

We may say that there is theoretical philosophy as well as practical philosophy. Theoretical philosophy includes departments of metaphysics, epistemology and logic. Practical part of philosophy covers philosophy of values or ethics, aesthetics, psychology and the study of religion.

The Functions of Philosophy

Generally we do not acquire our major beliefs through the process of reasoning. They come to us by way of authority or suggestion from our parents, teachers and others respected by us. Social environment and groups of men, whose views are simply accepted as the current ways of looking at things, may also contribute in the formation of

beliefs. But beliefs so acquired become prejudices unless they are put to critical examination. And this is one function of philosophy. It undertakes a critical examination of the grounds on which beliefs are held. A large part of the business of philosophy is to enquire what reason can do, what it cannot do, by way of supporting a particular belief. As human beings, endowed with reason, we cannot prevent ourselves from thinking about the frame and principles, the destiny of our lives. The right use of reason brings us nearer to truth. Philosophy itself is founded upon a belief expressed long ago by Socrates that "the unexamined life is not worth living."

The other function of philosophy is to frame a picture of the whole universe, to establish a complete world view. This function distinguishes it from the sciences which concentrate on a particular aspect of Nature. According to the British evolutionary philosophy. Herbert Spencer, science is partially unified knowledge while philosophy is completely unified knowledge. Philosophy is defined as the effort to comprehend the universe as a whole, not a special department of it. To know only a part is to have incomplete and distorted view of things.

The function of philosophy is not to change the world but to understand it. In the context of the contemporary world and its problems, philosophy is very relevant because it helps us to realise that there are very important questions which science cannot answer, and that scientific knowledge is not sufficient. Secondly, philosophy keeps people intellectually modest and aware that there are no shortcuts to knowledge, what we believe to be indisputably true may turn out to be untrue.

In discussing the aim of philosophy it is quite relevant to quote the great British philosopher Bertrand Russell, "I think philosophy has two uses. One of them is to keep alive speculations about things that are not yet amenable to scientific knowledge, after all, scientific knowledge covers a very small part of the things that interest mankind and ought to interest them. There are a great many things of immense interest about which science, at present at any rate, knows little and I don't want people's imaginations to be limited and enclosed within what can be now known. I think I enlarge your imaginative view of the world in the hypothetical realm and it is one of the uses of philosophy. Another use is to show that there are things which we thought we knew and don't know. Philosophy is to keep us thinking about things that we may come to know, and to keep us

modestly aware of how much that seems like knowledge is not knowledge."*

The discoveries of science have affected our daily conduct, beliefs and attitudes. Life has become mechanical and only materialistic values are being pursued. Moral values are being neglected. The tremendous progress of science has unfortunately led to the loss of spiritual significance. We are uncertain about our ultimate purposes, values and goals. There is only one way of escaping from this confusion. It is to direct our mind to the contemplation of the life situation as a whole. What we have lost is the total perspective. Our whole life is divided into fragments and there seems to be no overall purpose.

It is in this context that philosophy is particularly significant. It rises above this confused state of mind and grasps the total perspective. It is not a game played by leisurely intellectuals with abstract concepts. Rather, it deals with questions which vitally affect the worth and significance of human life. It helps in developing an objective, balanced and unbiased attitude to life.

Protagoras, a contemporary of Socrates, said "Man is the measure of all things" and thus emphasised the importance of human existence and its problems as the foremost problem of philosophy. In the same spirit much later, English poet, Alexander Pope, expressed his opinion: "The proper object of philosophical investigations is man, and it is by undertaking the analysis of the human situation that philosophy may be able to bring its age-old nomadic career to an end and come into its own." One reason for the unpopularity of philosophy was its excessive stress on abstract speculation. As a result, the existing human situation and its problems were relegated to the place of secondary importance. This tendency led to a revolt among intellectuals sensitive to human problems and it's growing uncertainties. This revolt was manifested in the form of various contemporary schools of philosophy like existentialism, pragmatism and humanism. These schools differ in their points of view and set forth different aims of philosophy. While existentialism lays emphasis on the existential situation of man as the supreme object of philosophical enquiry, pragmatism formulates a practical approach to age-old philosophical problems and declares that only those philosophical theories and beliefs should be accepted that are beneficial to the human condition. Humanism, which is a form of pragmatism, once

* John Lewis: *Introduction to Philosophy*. Watt and Co. Ltd., London, 1954.

again declares that man and his problems should be the only object of philosophical enquiry. If philosophy cannot help man in evolving a better life situation, in solving day-to-day problems which result in conflict, confrontation and wars, it is a waste of time. The common theme in these contemporary schools is that they reject any subject matter of philosophy which has no relation with life, either directly or indirectly.

Science, Religion and Philosophy

It is quite useful to discuss science, religion and philosophy under one heading in order to articulate their similarities and difference. Science is generally held to be opposed to religion because of it's distinct aim and method. It's aim is cognitive and it's method is empirical. It aims to increase our knowledge of nature. This knowledge enables is to exploit nature for our purposes. The method adopted by science for acquiring this knowledge is empirical; that is, it is based on human experience. Experience in science means observation, experimentation and verification. Religion on the other hand, is largely a matter of personal faith and belief. It aims at liberating man from bondage to materialistic life. Thus science and religion seem to tread different paths for reaching different goals. Philosophy is distinct from both science and religion since it does not entirely rely on observation and analysis for the discovery of truth and neither is it personal faith. It aims to develop right understanding of life and the world by critical reflection. Science and philosophy are similar since they are both congnitive disciplines, while religion and philosophy are similar in concerning themselves with the nature of man and his destiny.

We now discuss these topics separately and in greater detail for the benefit of beginners.

Science pertains to knowledge of the physical world. We have been progressing rapidly in scientific knowledge. Observation, experience, experimentation lead to the final decision in science. A scientist relies on the fact of observation and approaches knowledge through experiments. Science gives complete liberty to questions and personal verification before accepting truth about facts. Science proceeds with the acceptance of certain uncontradictory basic principles. A scientist believes that everything has a cause, and nothing happens without a cause. The scientific outlook is based on two things — a supreme confidence in human intellect and capability of understanding and a

general belief that everything in the world can be explained. Scientific outlook is the direct anti-thesis of the religious outlook which suggests that certain things cannot be explained as they are the work of God.

The scientific investigation of nature has led to wage a long struggle against human ignorance, superstition and scepticism. When Copernicus said, "The earth moves round the sun," everyone was amazed and scientists were viewed with suspicion. Today, when it is reported that man has landed on the moon, no one looks with wonder. This difference in human reaction is the result of long struggle that science had to wage against disbelieving man. Scientific researches have led to the clarity of our conception about nature. Two further points may be made about the impact of scientific knowledge. Firstly, science has alienated man from nature. This is because scientific knowledge is extremely specialised and narrow. It divides nature into minute units like molecules and atoms with which we are not familiar. This fragmentation of nature leads to our alienation from it since this is not the way we perceive nature in our everyday existence. Secondly, and more positively, science has been of enormous benefit since it has freed us of our superstitious beliefs about Nature. It has, thus, enabled us to understand and use Nature for our purposes.

Coming to religion, it is generally identified with rituals, with practices of one kind or another, with taboos and inhibitions and restraints of various kinds. Mostly religion implies belief in God. Perhaps religion started with fear but the idea of God came from wonder and awe. Religion also means worship in one way or another, and in such acts of worship the believer humbles himself, surrenders to the God of his belief. In religion there is something that cannot be explained. It can also be interpreted as understanding based on perception with oneself. Religion proclaims that behind all this phenomena, the world of nature and man , there is the reality called God. Thus, religion is not just based on faith, it is based on the fact that men who have discovered God come and tell us that they have discovered so. There are men who claim to have experienced God — become conscious of something within themselves. In this sense, religion is said to lead to a universal consciousness.

Religion is identified with feeling, emotion and sentiment, cult, ritual and faith. Religion begins with a simple rite but ends with the sublimest realisation. In between faith and such realisation there are

so many things with which religion is related. In its true sense religion is essentially a concern of the inner life. It implies a quality of life which binds together the faithful who share a common experience. The sense of a common ritual and faith leads to the sense of common brotherhood. Professor S. Radhakrishnan gives a broad meaning to religion. For him religion stands for all those ideals and purposes, influences and institutions which shape the character of man, both as an individual and as a member of society. It is the law of right living. Religion must be lived and felt. It is not correct belief but righteous living. "True religion", as Radhakrishnan says, "must express itself in love and aim at the unity of mankind." Love of man is as fundamental to religion as worship of God. "Truly religious men from Buddha and Christ down to ordinary men and women have striven to lighten the load of humanity."* Religion should not only imply a strong faith in the existence of God, in the divinity of man, but also a profound dissatisfaction with the existing state of things and a preparation for a new life. Thus, religion is understood today in the light of changed human situation and not in an orthodox sense.

Philosophy is wisdom acquired through right understanding. It is both critical reflection and contemplation. There is definite philosophy behind every branch of science and all expressions of religion. Philosophy is a logical discipline and a philosopher does not rely on imagination. He aims to exercise his rational faculty for the discovery of truth. Using both analysis and synthesis as its methods, philosophy aims to develop a comprehensive view of reality, of life and the world. It's ultimate aim is to promote not only happy but also, better living through critical reflection.

Philosophers act as a guide both to scientists and men of religion so that these contribute to the enrichment of human life. Philosophers have always been gifted men who looked at things in a detached manner. When Plato said "Until philosophers are kings or kings and princes have power and spirit of philosophy, human society will not cease from evil and sufferings," he stressed the importance of philosophy. Philosophy is not opposed to any branch of knowledge, much less to science and religion. It refers to a way of thinking, an attitude to life, hence, no aspect of human experience is without philosophy. Philosophy is mother of all sciences, it is science of sciences, since the earliest human inquiries were related to philosophical

* S. Radhakrishnan: *My Search for Truth*.

problems. Thus, we can say that philosophy deals with the fundamentals of life and, hence is intimately related with all areas of human interest.

Swami Vivekananda said, "Each soul is potentially divine. The goal is to manifest this divine within, by controlling Nature, external and internal. Do this either by work, or worship, or psychic control, or philosophy, by one or more, or all these — and be free. This is the whole religion. Doctrines or dogmas or rituals or books, or temples, or forms are but secondary details." If we accept this definition of religion then there is no difficulty in reconciling science, religion and philosophy. Science deals with the nature without and philosophy deals with the nature within us. Religion deals with the manifestation of divinity by controlling nature within and without. Thus all the three are intimately related.

Both science and religion operate on different lines but are closely related with the life of man. Scientific knowledge is objective but religious knowledge is subjective, because science perceives reality outside and religion perceives it inside the self. Scientific knowledge is based on sensory perception whereas religious knowledge originates from inner realisation. But religion aims to unify human experiences. Scientific knowledge is developing and is partial while religion aims to give the complete and final grasp of reality. Science has given physical power and amenities of life but religious knowledge gives strength and spiritual fulfilment. In spite of these differences, there is no contradiction between science and religion. They are mutually complementary as both aim to promote human interests. There is no doubt that the traditional view of religion based on ritualism, dogmas and blind faith is clearly opposed to science which is based on reason, analysis and verification. But dogmas and blind faith are not true religion. Religion in its correct sense perceives inner unity in apparent diversity. It breaks all barriers between man and man and aims to promote a sense of oneness.

Philosophy is an application of logic, application of the scientific method, application of mind to the problems of existence, problems of life and the problems associated with belief in the existence of God. Philosophy can be religious when it admits God as the foundation of all activities and all beauty. It is a special attitude to life. A philosopher is constantly engaged in applying logic for eliminating contradictory thoughts. He proceeds like a scientist but does not have the facility of experimentation, prediction and verification. But if

science belongs to the physical world, philosophy pertains to the subtler aspects of life and human endeavour.

Both science and philosophy are the product of man's creative thinking and activity. Science investigates the natural world in order to discover or evolve laws which govern it. Philosophy contemplates various forms of man's activity and experiences which have inherent values and which contribute to the enrichment of his life. It seeks to analyse and interpret various forms of cultural experiences.

While discussing the relation between science and philosophy, the areas of difference between the two must be made clear. Science is roughly concerned with the analysis of natural facts. Philosophy does not aim to discover new facts about the world, but takes a critical look at what is claimed to be fact by the scientist. Thus, philosophy is not concerned with mere observation but actually with its significance. The business of philosophy is to examine meanings and implications of the basic concepts which the scientists use. The scientists have little time for this and, moreover, the analysis of concepts is a specialised activity. For example, philosophers have analysed such concepts as cause and effect, induction space and time etc. These are crucial concepts in scientific theories. This highlights the relation of interdependence between science and philosophy. On the other hand, scientific theories also lead to philosophical problems and perspectives. For example, it is difficult to understand the empirical philosophy of Locke, Berkeley and Hume without taking into account the postulates of Newtonian physical science in the seventeenth century. In other words, the philosophical questions which the empiricist thinkers raised were not born of the philosophical tradition alone but were prompted by scientific advances. This is equally true in subsequent periods.

Both science and philosophy are cognitive enterprises seeking to acquire knowledge. Scientific knowledge is certain, exact and organised. It is based on the method of observation, experimentation, analysis, classification and generalisation. Philosophy goes beyond the knowledge furnished by science. It wants a comprehensive understanding for the ultimate explanation of the world. Besides this, philosophy also deals with the purpose of things the meaning and value of existence. It tries to interpret the conclusions of sciences alongwith the data of religious and ethical experiences. In other words, while science is content with knowledge, philosophy aims at wisdom because knowledge without wisdom is often dangerous. This is made

possible by organising and rationalising scientific knowledge.

But science and philosophy differ on the basis of approach, point of view and method. Philosophy deals with the whole universe, while science takes fragmented view of it. Science is analytical but philosophy is both analytical and synthetic in approach. Philosophy uses the scientific analysis of nature and goes a step further in trying to establish a total view of reality in order to determine the meaning, value and purpose of human existence. In addition to the knowledge of physical objects, philosophy takes into account moral, aesthetic and religious experiences of mankind to arrive at a rational conception of the real. While science reduces everything to certain formulas, philosophy supplements by adding qualitative interpretation of things and human actions. Man must be made conscious of a higher purpose of life and must be helped in understanding what is desirable and proper. Science analyses facts, philosophy determines their value. In this sense, they are both closely related.

2

METAPHYSICS

The Nature of Metaphysics

Generally philosophy is identified with metaphysics and for many philosophy means metaphysics. For this reason it may be considered as the most important field of philosophical inquiry. Metaphysics is the systematic study of the fundamental problems relating to the nature of ultimate reality.

The term 'metaphysics' literally means beyond physics (meta — beyond). The term was first introduced purely accidentally. When the writings of Aristotle were first collected and arranged by Andronicus of Rhodes (in Rome about 70 B.C.), the treatises on what Artistotle had called "First philosophy" were placed after the treatises on physics. Subsequently the scholastics used the term transphysica for studies which come after the ordinary physical studies of natural phenomena. The writings of Aristotle which were given the name metaphysics concerned with things other than natural objects. In such writings there was discussion on philosophical problems like God, soul, and other problems concerning supernatural phenomena. Thus, later on, metaphysics came to mean the study of those phenomena which lie beyond nature.

Philosophy began with metaphysics. It referred to a definite attitude of human mind distinct from moral, religious and aesthetic attitude. Metaphysics implies a belief that there is more in the world than what appears in our sense perceptions. Metaphysical speculations spring from two basic impulses, i.e., to know the real and the desire to construct a comprehensive view of the nature, origin and future of the world including man. It can be safely said that before man started exploring the natural world, he was faced with some basic questions regarding the origin of the world, the nature of universe, the nature of reality etc. Thus, metaphysical thinking from the very beginning was directed to the solution of the problem of reality.

Attempts have been made to define metaphysics in order to specify its subject matter and purpose. Starting with Aristotle, it was

considered as "a science which studies Being qua Being and the properties inherent in it in virtue of its own nature." Thus Aristotle considered metaphysics as the study of Being, or reality as such. Here Being is used to denote essence and ultimate reality is understood in terms of essence.

This definition also emphasises what Aristotle said without using the term. Marvin considers metaphysics as the science of reality. In the same spirit Taylor says, "Now, such an enquiry into the general character of reality, as opposed to more or less unreal appearances, is precisely what is meant by metaphysics."[1] This definition points to an important fact that there is a necessity of metaphysics as an enquiry into the general character of reality. What appears as real is not real. There is a basic distinction between reality and its mere appearances. What we see and experience through our senses is not real. Our experiences reveal contradictions. The objects which we perceive are limited to time and space. That which is subjected to conditions cannot be real. As Bradley said, "Reality is such that it does not contradict itself." This is the absolute criterion of reality.

H.P. Grice, D.F. Pears and P.F. Strawson in their joint article say, "The conception of metaphysics as a supremely general study which is somewhat presupposed by the special sciences, is a fairly enduring one."[2] They mean that the most general study of reality is the purpose of metaphysics. There is a deep urge in man to know the real which is absolute. Science constructs the concept of real which is empirical, relative to human observation. Scientific knowledge is perceptual knowledge. A metaphysician does not completely rely on perception and discusses other form of knowledge. Man does not feel satisfied with the conclusions of science, he wants to know absolute reality as it is and not as it appears. Metaphysics aims to provide an integrated view of reality unlike science which presents fragmentary knowledge.

Metaphysics deals with three issues. First, it makes a distinction between reality and appearances and tries to save us from mistaking the unreal for the real. Secondly, metaphysics provides a more comprehensive understanding of the world than that which is provided by common sense and science. To the extent that science is an integrated survey of the universe, it serves a metaphysical purpose. Lastly,

1. A.E.Taylor: *Elements of Metaphysics*, London, 1912.
2. Quoted in *Nature of Metaphysics*; D.F. Pears, New York, 1957.

metaphysics refers to man's earliest attempt to understand the mystery of Nature, its origin and future possibilities. In this sense, it is concerned with the first cause of the cosmos, that is, the first event which led to the birth of theis world and the nature of human destiny.

There is a liberal view about the nature of metaphysics. This view holds that metaphysics is quite different from science but still meaningful and relevant in the scheme of knowledge. There are areas where the scientific approach is not possible since they are outside the scope of science. Metaphysical analysis is employed in such areas. To put it more clearly, science, investigates whatever is perceptible to our senses, but the cause of the world, the ultimate reality is not given to our sense perceptions. Therefore, science cannot investigate these phenomena. Therefore, it is left to metaphysics to analyse them. Metaphysical knowledge, therefore, cannot be equated with scientific knowledge. But it is no less relevant and meaningful.

Metaphysics is concerned with knowledge of the reality which implies the essence of the objective world of things. It tries to investigate the basis of this world, the first cause, the causa sui. All that is supersensible is dealt with in metaphysics. Distinguished from natural sciences, metaphysics may be considered as supra-scientific knowledge because it transcends the scientific knowledge.

The aim of metaphysics is to apprehend reality. By reality we mean the ultimate reality. In the writings of Aristotle we find the use of the term *first cause* or primary cause of things. That which is the basis of everything else and is beyond all contradictions. Besides this, the ultimate reality is characterised by infinity, independence, transcendence and immutability.

In the light of this we may say that metaphysics investigates the nature of reality applying analytical and critical procedures. It is not totally speculative. Even human experience is analysed to determine its reality. Metaphysics is chiefly concerned with the self-consistency of the data furnished by experience. For this it uses analysis as it's method. Therefore, it can be said that metaphysical method is *a priori*, non-empirical or independent of experience. The ultimate aim is to develop an overall picture of the world and, hence, the method is constructive like scientific method.

Methods in Metaphysics

Rene Descartes, the father of modern western philosophy gave a

four-fold method of metaphysical inquiry. This is as follows:
First, "Never to accept anything as true which I did not know to be such."
Second, "To divide each of the difficulties under examination into as many parts as possible."
Third, "To conduct thoughts in such an order that by commencing with objects the simplest and easiest to know I might ascend by little and little and as it were, step by step, to the knowledge of the more complex."
Four, " To make enumerations so complete and reviews so general that I might be assured that nothing was omitted."*

Thus, in the spirit of a mathematician, Descartes laid stress on clarity and careful analysis in any metaphysical inquiry.

Enchanted by the glories of science and its discoveries, some philosophers advocated the empirical approach in metaphysics. The British philosopher, Bacon, advocates the inductive method. But this approach proved self-destructive with empiricist philosophers.

Some philosophers have supported intuition as a method for metaphysics and emphasised its preference over empirical and scientific methods. Intuition is said to be super-rationalistic or super-scientific in nature. Indian philosophers have favoured this method in investigating the nature of ultimate reality. As Dr. S. Radhakrishnan said, "A darshana is a spiritual perception, a whole view revealed to the soul." Even western philosophers like Henry Bergson and William James attached great importance to intuition. The importance of intuition is emphasised because reason or intellect has its own limitations in apprehending the real. F.H. Bradley points out in his *Appearance and Reality*, "That thought commits suicide when it reaches the reality." It is incapable of grasping the reality. Besides this, human experience cannot be restricted to mere sensuous experiences. Metaphysicians have claimed the superiority of intuition over other methods. Intuition implies direct and immediate experience of Reality.

In conclusion, it may be said that since metaphysics deals with transcendental phenomena and its nature has been variously described, it is difficult to suggest one specific method. As a matter of fact, metaphysical inquiry combines in itself elements of observation,

*Rene Descartes: *A Discourse on Method*

analysis, deduction and common sense, intuition, dialectic and synthetic vision. Metaphysicians have used all these elements in their attempt to construct a comprehensive view of the universe and ultimate reality.

The scope of a subject refers to it's field of study. Metaphysics has its own subject-matter, which is the study of Being or Reality. Since it is the most general study unlike the special sciences the scope of metaphysics is very wide. It is concerned with primary or first cause of everything and imparts wisdom. In order to discover the first cause we have to deal with all aspects of human experiences and the world of objects. In the words of John Caird, "There is no province of human experience, there is nothing in the whole realm of reality which lie beyond the domain of philosophy or to which philosophical investigation does not extend." This statement about philosophy is fully applicable to metaphysics since it deals with a comprehensive view of the entire universe. A metaphysician has to enquire about the origin of universe, the meaning of life and the nature of ultimate reality.

As for the significance and importance of metaphysics in the scheme of knowledge, it may be said that it constitutes the highest wisdom directed to the understanding of the reality of things. Taking into account actual human experiences, common sense and the conclusions of sciences, metaphysics aims to determine the real after critical examination. From the Indian point of view, metaphysics attempts to give spiritual perception, direct and immediate vision of the real.

It is in the nature of man to think about the problems of life, the ultimate aim of human existence and the nature of the physical world. This leads to an inquiry about the essence of reality. Metaphysics, therefore, can be considered to be the necessary expression of human mind as it arises out of the very nature of man as a rational being. The whole attitude towards life is bound to get influenced by metaphysical pursuits. According to Indian philosophy, ignorance is the cause of bondage while knowledge liberates man. In this sense metaphysics gives meaning and purpose to our life. In the words of Prof. J.H. Muirhead, "Men can no more live without philosophy than they can live without the atmosphere which surrounds them." This statement emphasises the importance of philosophy and for that matter of metaphysics, since most part of philosophy is metaphysics. We shall now discuss some of the more important schools of metaphysics.

Materialism

Philosophy in the form of metaphysics aims to know the real. It attempts to evolve a comprehensive view of the universe. For this purpose, metaphysics offers a variety of views and approaches. The history of philosophy is the record of different points of views about the real expressed by philosophers from time to time. Broadly these points of views are categorised as materialism, idealism, evolutionism, pragmatism, naturalism, and realism.

Materialism is a metaphysical theory concerning the nature and number of the ultimate principles in terms of which the universe can be explained. According to this doctrine matter is the ultimate constituent of the universe. It is extended, impenetrable, eternally self-existent and susceptible of motion. Mind or consciousness is a mode or property of matter, and psychical processes are reducible to physical processes. Materialism as a philosophical point of view regards all the facts of the universe as explainable in terms of matter and motion. It explains all psychical processes by physical and chemical changes in the nervous system. It is opposed to both natural realism and idealism.

Materialism is a tendency to regard the world of objects as fundamentally physical. It is an attractive point of view and appeals to common sense due to the following reasons. Our knowledge of matter, its properties and the changes that it undergoes, is much greater than our knowledge of mind. Not only this, we are immediately confronted with matter and it is much easier to know its dimensions. The physical sciences reveal the world of objects constituted of matter as an interconnected system. So far as observation goes, we know mind only in connection with bodies or material organism. We have no knowledge of mind as independent of body while we commonly perceive most material things existing without mind. In addition to these reasons, there are the facts furnished by physiology and its allied branches, which substantiate the materialist view of reality. A very clear, strong and convincing case for the priority of matter to mind, dependence of mental on the material, is presented by science. Materialism asserts that consciousness is only a property, a product or an effect of matter. It seems impossible to invalidate the arguments for materialism from the standpoint of physical sciences.

Materialism as a philosophical school has a very old history. In the West it was the first philosophy to be adopted by the human mind that rejected the concept of supernatural reality as the basis of this

universe. All pre-Socratic thinkers were materialists. Thales, Anaximander and Anaximenes interpreted the universe as a derivative of water, fire, or air respectively. Following them, Democritus (460-370 B.C.) gave a systematic exposition of materialistic point of view. According to him the physical world was composed of indivisible material particles known as atoms. His fundamental proposition was that nothing existed except the movement of atoms in the empty void and all else was illusion. Mind or consciousness was also made up of similar atoms. The infinite multiplicity of atoms endowed with perpetual motion differed in form and size. Atoms are in motion out of necessity and not due to any supernatural power or purpose. Democritus rejected teleology and asserted that atoms move due to a cause, reason and necessity. Thus, the concept of final cause and intelligent purpose was banished from the world. The soul also consists of fine smooth atoms whose motion produces the phenomena of life. There are no immaterial bodies.

Epicurus and his followers took over the whole of Democritean atomism but with modifications. In Epicurus the materialist philosophy serves the purpose of personal hygiene or personal salvation. It is given to men who can enjoy and is directed to free them from fear of death, gods and the blows of adverse circumstances. Epicurus declared pleasure and absence of pain as the ultimate aim of life. A wiseman need not fear death because it implies dispersion of atoms and annihilation of consciousness.

After Epicurus, stoic philosophers adopted materialism of a peculiar character due to a different motivation. According to them, human thought, emotions, ethical ideas of good and right are merely expressions of the organisation of bodies. Even in the philosophy of Aristotle the germs of materialism can be traced. His behaviouristic psychology asserted that soul was the form of the body, and therefore, it could not exist independently of body.

Coming to the modern age, resurgence of materialist philosophy in European thought was characterised by the introduction of the experimental method and mechanistic atomism of philosopher-scientists during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In this context, two lines of materialist philosophy were developed by Descartes in France and Bacon in England.

Descartes rejected Democritean atomism as mathematical abstraction, and his rationalistic mechanism led him to materialistic solution of psychological problems. Although a dualist in metaphysics,

Descartes asserted monism in physics due to denial of the distinction between organic and inorganic nature. Plant and animal behaviour were assimilated to the behaviour of machines. In England, Francis Bacon staged a revolt against metaphysical spiritualism and tried to revive atomism as a basis of materialism. Following Bacon, Hobbes systematised the materialistic philosophy. In his materialistic philosophy Hobbes stated that all change was motion. For him physics, ethics, politics were sciences concerned with tracing the effects of motion in the domain of nature, mind and society, respectively. He made materialism the foundation of political absolutism. The influence of Hobbes' philosophy strengthened by John Locke's theory of experience reappeared in the philosophy of French Enlightenment. Accepting the materialist philosophy that the world consists of only matter in motion and that all knowledge and ideas are derived from experience, the materialist school of France faced the problem of explaining the way sensation or consciousness arose from movement of matter. It was asserted that sensation was the general property of matter. Mind was a function of matter. Mental phenomena obeyed the same mechanical laws as matter. It must be asserted that French and German materialists never aimed to construct a theoretical system. They only wanted to discover in materialism a starting point for political, social and religious reform. With the proposition that man is the product of his own environment, they rejected the doctrine of original sin and the concept of natural grace. In the nineteenth century, materialism was extended to deal with social problems and this gave rise to a new type of materialism known as dialectical materialism of Karl Marx and Engels. The theoretical formulation of materialism in the previous century was motivated by the desire to win new spheres for human control from religious and spiritualistic influence. From Democritus to Karl Marx materialists directed their arguments against the dominant systems of spiritualism which emphasised the existence of immaterial entities and final causes. In Marx and Engels we discover the most advanced form of the materialist point of view broadly referred to as Marxism. Marxism looks for the material roots of each phenomenon and views them in their historical connections and movements. Thus materialism became the philosophy of revolution.

The fundamental postulate of materialism is that matter is the ultimate substance. This doctrine is opposed to spiritualism according to which all nature is spiritual. Whatever exists in nature is of

material character and is composed of material particles. Anything which is devoid of material characteristics is not recognised as real. Materialism not only denies the existence of soul and God but also the independent existence of mind and consciousness. In its original Democritean interpretation, materialism accepted the concepts of soul, mind or consciousness but considered these as composed of atoms. Modern scientific materialism denies the existence of anything other than matter. Mind evolves out of matter and has no independent existence.

Materialism is allied to realism, naturalism and evolutionism. Whatever we perceive through our senses cannot be considered as unreal. The world of matter is the real world. As naturalism it believes in the operation of natural laws in the process of development both in the case of Nature as well as human society. Thus materialism does not accept the existence of a supernatural agency for guiding and regulating the destiny of the world. Materialism does not believe in the concept of creation because existence of God as the creator is denied. The natural world has evolved from earlier stages. Life has also evolved out of matter.

The metaphysics of materialism starts with the belief that God, as creator, sustainer and destroyer of this world, does not exist. God exists only as a concept in the human mind. Materialists tried to remove the fear of God from man. If all is matter then God is also matter. Here an interesting thing to note is that all the qualities traditionally attributed to God are the same as found in matter. God is considered as eternal, and matter is also eternal since it can neither be created nor destroyed. God is said to be omnipresent and matter is found everywhere. God is considered as the ultimate cause of things and matter is at the root of everything since everything originated from matter. Besides this, it is said that nothing caused God, similarly nothing caused matter. God is said to be omnipotent or all powerful, and for materialists no non-material power exists. What God wills must be, everything moves by the will of God. Materialists hold that mechanical laws determine everything, nothing takes place outside the operation of natural laws. God is also considered as immanent and matter also exists in each part of the world. God is said to be all-knowing, the materialists hold that all knowledge is obtained only through the brain which is material. Religious people often say that God is a person, appears in personal form. But if all life and mind is material, then all personality is material. This comparison between

God and matter logically leads the materialists to believe that there is only matter and the concept of God is unnecessary and irrelevant.

Materialists hold that life is not a special creation by a divine will. It is a product of biochemical processes. Biological evolution, according to materialists, is a product of material forces acting and reacting upon each other in the complex system of Nature. Indian materialists deny life in any form after death and reject the concept of rebirth. They also consider the world of matter as composed of only four elements — fire, water, earth and ai — and reject other.

Materialists give a fresh interpretation of mind and body. Mind is not a substance as supposed by the rationalist. There is no difference between the mind and brain. There is nothing like soul existing within the body. Behaviour of the body depends on the working of brain. Considering the mind as a function of brain the materialists developed a distinct psychology known as behaviourist psychology. Since mind is not different from the brain, it disappears when the brain ceases to function. Thus the traditional mind-body problem is solved in a simple manner. With this, the concept of free will is also ruled out because human desires are determined by physical nature and environment.

In the field of epistemology the materialists emphatically assert that all our knowledge is confined to the physical world. Knowledge comes through senses and experience is the only source of all our knowledge. The objects which we know through our senses are independent of us. The validity of all sources of knowledge except perception is questioned. Knowledge through perception is the only valid knowledge. What we perceive directly and immediately constitutes indubitable knowledge.

The traditional view of morality and values is also rejected by the materialists. Values arise as a consequence of physical processes and remain in existence so long as those particular processes continue. When all living beings cease to exist, all values will disappear. Our instincts are the root of ethics. Materialism rejects the view of absolute values — absolute good and absolute right. All values are relative to time and circumstances. Whatever produces the sensation of pleasure is good. The Greek philosopher Aristippus and Epicurus developed hedonistic ethics on the basis of this point of view. This ethical philosophy was further developed, systematised and improved later by Hobbes, Bentham, Mill and Sidgwick.

Kulpe described three kinds of metaphysical materialism. First, the

attributive materialism. It considers mind as the attribute of matter. Secondly, the causal materialism. It considers mind as an effect of matter and, consequently upholds a causal relation between mind and matter. Thirdly, the equative materialism which looks upon mental processes as really material in character.

Different forms of materialism can be classified as follows:

1. *Naive Materialism*

Considering reality as material and constituted of atoms, naive materialism credited matter with all properties which are said to belong to life. All pre-Socratic thinkers were of this category.

2. *Cosmological Materialism*

This doctrine explains the evolution of the cosmos in terms of the fundamental substance, matter. The stoics and epicureans belonged to this category.

3. *Anti-theological Materialism*

The dominant motive of this form of materialism was to replace the religious view of reality by the scientific and common sense view. It is directed against all dogmas and superstitions. Thomas Hobbes and French materialists belong to this category.

Materialism is considered to be the closest to scientific analysis and therefore, materialistic interpretation of reality finds favour with physical scientists. It is also close to the common sense view of the world. It frees man from slavery to dogmas, superstitions and contradictions, involved in supernaturalism. For these reasons materialism appeals to the average man.

Indian Materialism

No discussion of metaphysical materialism will be complete without mentioning Indian materalism which finds expression in the philosophy of *Caravaka* or the *Lokayatas* . Since the materialistic point of view appeals to ordinary people and it represents their attitude towards things and their style of thinking and action, the materialists in India have been known as *Lokayatas.*

Origin

There is no definite account regarding the origin of materialist philosophy in India. References to the negative aspect of *Lokayata* philosophy are found even in the *Vedas,* of materialist thinking in the

Svetasvatara Upanisad, the *Mahabharata* and in the *Puranas*. Some scholars consider the *Lokayata* philosophy as the oldest of all Indian schools. The term *darsana* used for philosophy means perception. According to the *Lokayata* and *Caravaka* philosophy perception is the only source of knowledge. The emphasis on perception indicates that the word originated with the followers of materialist philosophy. Besides this, almost all schools of Indian philosophy criticise truths established by *Lokayatas*. Thus it appears that materialism was prior to all the other schools of philosophy.

Brahaspati is generally recognised as the founder of Indian materialism, the author of *Lakayata Sastra*. He expressed his views regarding the origin of the world in the hypothesis that in the beginning Being came out of nothing, that matter is the ultimate reality. The *Caravakas* have been referred to as a sect devoted to the ideas of Brahaspati. Members of this sect ridiculed all morality and indulged in all kinds of sensuous pleasures. In the *Maitrayani Upanishad* there is a story about Brahaspati. Demons or *asuras* became very powerful at one time and threatened the position of Indra, the king of heaven. Brahaspati assumed the form of Sukracharya, the teacher of *asuras*, and preached false knowledge of sensuous enjoyment for the safety of Indra and destruction of the *asuras*. Thus Brahaspati is painted as a deceiver.

In the *Vishnu Purana*, there is a story giving an interesting account of the effect of materialist philosophy on those who follow it. At one time a number of demons started severe penance following strictly the rules of the Vedas. This caused great fear in the gods and Indra, their king. They thought the demons might overpower them with their extraordinary spiritual power and capture the heaven. Consequently, they prayed to God for destroying the demons. At their prayer *Mayamoha* was created who preached the pernicious doctrine of Brahaspati to the demons. Following that philosophy the demons indulged in sensuous enjoyment and got destroyed. Over and above these stories ,the *Taittiriya Upanishad* contains an incident in which Brahaspati hit the head of goddess Gayatri and her head was smashed into parts. But it had no effect on Gayatri and she remained immortal. Gayatri is the symbol of Hinduism. This shows that materialist philosophy of *Lokayata* could not make any impact on the Hindu way of life.

Metaphysics

Materialism was originally a tendency of thinking in India opposed to

the current superstitions and dogmas in religion. But gradually it developed into a system of philosophy with distinct metaphysical, epistemological and ethical views. Followers of *Lokayata* philosophy denied the reality of God as creator and soul as immortal. There is no soul apart from body. Only the present is real and all ideas of past and future life, and of God as presiding over the destiny of mankind, have been invented by men to create fear in ordinary people. After death, nothing is left except the physical body which is cremated or buried. There is no evidence to prove the immortal nature of soul. What we call soul is the living principle of all organisms. Our experiences do not give any knowledge to prove the reality of supra-sensuous doctrines.

Epistemology

The *Lokayatas* recognised perception as the only source of knowledge. All other sources of knowledge such as inference, testimony and scriptures were examined by them and proved to be invalid. These sources provide doubtful and probable knowledge lacking clarity and certainty, the criteria of valid knowledge. Materialists ridiculed the so-called intuitive knowledge. They also recognised only four elements such as water, air, fire and earth and rejected ether (akasa) as it cannot be known through perception. All the objects are constituted of these four elements. Mixed together in a certain proportion and certain order these elements get transformed into an organism. What we call consciousness is only produced from the body and is the function of the body. It is through the operation of vital functions of the body that consciousness is produced. It is inseparable from life.

Ethics

The *Lokayatas* preached ethical doctrine based on hedonism. Since the world is constituted of material objects and there is no life before and after death, we must make the most of this world. The ideal of our conduct is nothing except maximum pleasure; sins and virtues have no meaning. The materialists advocated the ideal of pleasure in the spirit of Aristippus and Epicurus, the Greek philosophers, but with greater emphasis. Rejecting the theory of *karmas* (action) the *Lokayatas* asserted the reality of only this life. Who knows what will happen after death? This much is known that in the world sinners enjoy while virtuous suffer. It is nonsense to suppose that the fruits of *karmas* will be reaped after this life. As for liberation or *moksha*, the *Lokayatas* emphatically deny its possibility. There is no liberation

from the inevitable sufferings of life. The stories about heaven and hell contained in the *Puranas* were the brainwork of some people without any basis. Thus we find that the materialist philosophy of *Lokayata* is a systematic account containing views regarding knowledge, reality and morals. We may not accept all that is preached by Indian materialism but that does not decrease its importance as a system along with other schools of Indian philosophy.

Idealism

Idealism is metaphysical point of view based on the belief that reality is of the nature of mind as against materialism which holds reality to be characterised by matter and motion. Thus idealism and materialism stand opposed to each other. The mind and its ideas constitute reality. Instead of accepting the view that the universe is rooted in matter, the idealist point of view emphasises the importance of mind as the ground of the universe. According to it, mind is prior to matter. The world of nature cannot be properly explained in terms of motion, mechanical causes and laws. It is only with reference to reason, values, ideals and purposes that we can interpret the vast Nature surrounding us. Matter and physical forces are external to mind and they are not ultimately real.

For materialism, which is often said to represent the common sense view of reality and knowledge, matter is real. But we also know that it is only through sensation and perception that matter is known to us. Sensations in themselves do not carry any meaning. It is only through the mind that meaning, order and unity are contributed to sensations. Matter is known to us only as an idea in our thought and through the mediation of the senses. Mental dispositions such as feeling, remembering, recognising cannot be attributed to matter. A materialist cannot explain mental state of consciousness. Since we cannot explain mind in terms of matter we must accept the priority of mind over matter. According to Fichte, the famous German idealist, "We must either explain mind by physical nature, or we must explain physical nature by mind." As the former is impossible we must adopt the later.

Idealism as a metaphysical tendency is opposed to the view that mind and its content represent empirical reality. Ideas are independent of the limitations and imperfections of empirical reality. Over nature and experiences, idealism grants primacy to spiritual representations. Apart from the self or mind there can be no world of objects. An

object which is not object of some consciousness is not comprehensible.

Man is rational by nature. When he confronts the vast nature around him extended through space and time he asks himself, "Is this nature meaningful or meaningless?" Is nature a vast machine governed by mechanical laws or a process directed towards a goal? Idealism declares that nature has a meaning and purpose. We discover in nature unity and harmony. Not only this, the living things manifest infinite possibility through the prevailing will to live. This confirms the idealist belief that man is not merely a biological machine. The objective order of the world is not mechanical but moral. In our appreciation of things we come close to an immediate grasp of the ultimate sense of existence. All that is beautiful and good in the life of man constitutes human excellences and idealists call these spiritual excellences. In broader sense these imply intellectual and moral capacities in man. These give meaning and purpose to life. The mechanical interpretation of nature and the biological interpretation of human personality cannot explain moral and spiritual values in human life.

Modern idealism regards the world as spiritual, rational and with a significance. The magnificent unity and harmony that we observe in Nature implies internal relations between things. Man is essentially a self, a spiritual being. Modern idealism also emphasises human freedom, self-determination and moral responsibility.

Idealism in its epistemological sense, denies the existence of objects independent of human perception. Apart from the mind there can be no world of objects. Knowledge is a process in which subject and object stand in the relation of interdependence. Idealism is opposed to the view that knowledge is the result of relation between two separate independent realities. Mind is considered as immanent in all cognitive experiences and is actively involved in the process of knowledge. Idealism in metaphysics is the view which attributes meaning and purpose to the universe. The world is intelligible only as a system of ends. Human destiny is not limited to the sensible world. Man is a spiritual being endowed with infinite possibility. In this sense idealism is close to spiritualism and absolutism. The idealist view of life considers all things to be the manifestation of the same spirit. In ethical sense idealism implies the recognition of values and ideals. The world is a moral order and the ultimate goal of man is realisation of his spiritual nature.

The basic philosophy of idealism can be briefly summarised as follows:

1. There is a broad agreement among all idealists that the world is not a vast machine governed by mechanical laws. They reject the primacy of matter over mind and assert that the world of natural objects and the unity and harmony observed in nature cannot be adequately explained by reference to the mechanical principles.
2. All idealists give a teleological explanation of the universe. The world has a meaning and a purpose. This is supported by the inner harmony both in the universe and soul of man. Recognising the importance of physical sciences they agree that psychology, ethics and aesthetics have equally important role to play in the life of man and in the explanation of things with intrinsic value. Moral values and cultivation of the sense of appreciating beauty of nature enrich human existence.
3. Idealism emphasises the position of man as the central figure in the scheme of things. Man performs vital function within the great organism of the universe. The life of man is important because his destiny, in a profound sense, is linked with the destiny of the world. The whole Nature responds to human aspirations. It is only in the world that a desire for ideal life, for beauty and righteousness can be fulfilled. Idealism finds scope for moral and religious demands in this world. It is not a blind play of *mechanical* forces but a fully intelligible scheme of things.
4. Denying the materialistic view that all is matter idealists generally agree that objects of nature are objects either of thought or of sensation or of both. There is nothing in nature which is not an integral part of mind. The world is meaningful since mind acts always in terms of meanings.
5. Emphasis on mental or spiritual aspect of the world is also an important trait of idealism. Modern idealism in particular regards the world as essentially spiritual, rational and moral. Idealists like Green and Bradley regard man as spiritual being and consider realisation of this truth as the highest goal for man. The physical world is only the appearances of the real. This emphasis on the self and spirituality is also the characteristic trait of Indian idealism, which finds expression in the philosophy of the *Upanishads*, the *Bhagvad Gita* and *Vedanta.*

Strictly speaking idealism is a modern philosophical theory. But when we examine the entire range of philosophical thinking in the

light of its historical development, we find traces of idealistic philosophy in ancient Greek thought too. "Man is the measure of all things" declared Protagoras — and thus emphasised the importance of the subject against the objective world. Following this, Socrates perceived the importance of conceptual element in knowledge and tried to break through the hard realism of common sense. He also taught that life was explicitly a system of ends. More explicit presentation of idealism in the ancient period is found in the philosophy of Plato. In his search of reality Plato arrived at the conclusion that transcendental forms not known through the senses constitute the essence of reality. He called these forms ideas. These ideas are eternal, unchanging and cannot be perceived through the senses. The world of nature perceived by the senses is an important copy of these ideas. Ideas are the eternal essence and serve as ideals and patterns for the objects of senses. The world of matter appears through senses while ideas are known through reason. The world of senses is in constant flux but the ideas are always unchanging. Things come and go but ideas remain as they are. For example the idea of chair is real while chair as an object is unreal because it is not eternal. In fact it is on the basis of idea of chair that chairs will continue to be created by carpenters. In short, Plato attributed autonomous reality to ideas and combined them into an ideal world as opposed to the empirical world of senses. His idealism is objectivistic and transcendental and implies moral striving after ideals and higher values.

When we come to Aristotle we find him representing a reaction against idealism in order to return to the position of common sense dualism. But at the same time he attempts to restore idealistic theory to a more satisfactory form. His account of the process of knowledge in his logical treatises shows the idealistic bent of his philosophy. The universal is real and it is that which gives coherence and individuality to the particulars of the senses. He made it clear that no explanation of the world could be satisfactory that was not based on the notion of continuity in the sense of an order of existence in which the reality of the lower was to be sought in the higher. Aristotle also made it clear that the opposition between mind and matter could not be absolute.

Coming to the modern period Descartes declared that only the existence of self is beyond any doubt. This certainty is drawn from the proposition 'I think, therefore, I exist — *cogito ergo sum*'. Belief in the self is a sel-fevident truth. But Descartes also established the

existence of the world. The dualism of Cartesian philosophy is characterised by recognition of the reality of mind and matter. Both matter and mind are substances; matter is characterised by extension and mind by thought. There is, therefore, sharp opposition between material substance and mental substance. Thus, without denying the independent reality of matter, Descartes and his followers recognised the reality of mind or self. Hence, his idealism finds expression in dualism.

A more forceful exposition of idealism in the modern period is found in the philosophy of Bishop Berkeley. Directing his attack against atheism and materialism, Berkeley rejected the attitude which granted matter an existence equal to that of mind or spirit. He asserted that the plain road of common sense which we call realism governed by the dictates of nature was bound to lead us to contradictions and paradoxes and finally to scepticism. We shall discuss Berkeley's idealism in detail in the following pages. Here it is sufficient to say that his ideas gave a forceful impetus to idealistic philosophy which was developed by Kant, post-Kantian German idealists and British as well as American idealists of the later period.

Modern idealism in its more mature expression finds place in the philosophy of Kant. In contrast to the ontological and logical character of ancient idealism, Kant brought out the epistemological significance of idealistic theory. Ideas are not transcendent or *quasi*-divine beings but are forms of human intellect which model the empirical data received through the senses. Thus, the synthesis of form and matter results and this constitutes experience. Behind the world of experience, there is noumena, thing in itself, which remains unknowable. The post-Kantian idealists thinkers Fichte, Schelling and Hegel tried to eliminate the transcendent reality of Kant and made efforts to convert thought into the exclusive basis of the universe. Hegel declared that the ultimate law of the world was a paradox — a dialectic in the structure of the world. The abstract idea takes shape and meaning in the imperfect material world so as to gain perfection. Reason enters nature to become spirit.

In the West during the end of the last century and beginning of the present, idealism remained a dominant philosophy. It was chiefly the continuation of Hegelian philosophy. Hegel died in 1831 at the age of sixty-one and his influence spread slowly. In England, J. H. Sterling through his book *The Secrets of Hegel* in 1865 laid the foundation of Neo-Hegelianism. Then came a long chain of thinkers like

T.H. Green, Edward Caird J.E. McTaggart, F.H. Bradley and Bernard Bosanquet. The influence of Neo-Hegelianism spread to America and the chief leader of the movement there was Josiah Royce.

The basic idea of the Hegelian idealism is the notion of the spirit and the British neo-Hegelians emphasised that reality may be supposed to be the self-conscious spirit in which mind and matter are included as two different yet correlative aspects. Green discovered the presence of spiritual principle in both knowledge and nature. The self and the not-self constitute the being of the one and the same spirit. The unity that spirit exemplifies is of an organic nature. In their epistemological argument they discovered the existence of spiritual principle as necessary presupposition of human knowledge. The universe is conceived as the interrelated system of objects in an absolute, all inclusive, self-conscious mind or spirit on which it is dependent. In other words, the existence of one eternal absolute spirit is demonstrated as the ground of the objective world. Like Bradley and Bosanquet, Josiah Royce, the leading American idealist tried to show that the self-transcending implications of our finite experience point to an Absolute Being. The Absolute of philosophy for Royce is the God of religion.

After this brief survey of the historical development of idealism in the West we can form a general idea of the idealistic metaphysics, epistemology and ethics. But this treatment of idealistic philosophy cannot be complete without a discussion of the various forms of idealism. Three important forms of idealism are generally recognised:

1. Subjective idealism.
2. Transcendental idealism.
3. Objective/absolute idealism.

Subjective Idealism

Subjective idealism is generally attributed to the great Irish philosopher George Berkeley. With his keen anti-materialistic bent of mind Berkeley rejected the idea of inert substance existing independently of perception. What we call material objects are in fact objects of our experience and experience consists of sensory perceptions. When we perceive an object we consider it as existing. An object is a set of sensations which are subjective. The world, therefore, is a mental world. If there is no sensation we cannot prove the existence of objects. The objects are just perceptions. This view is summed up in Berkeley's famous dictum — *To be is to be perceived.*

Berkeley was an empiricist. He agreed with all empiricists that experience was the source of all our knowledge. But he was also interested in defining the limits of our knowledge. Our knowledge of objects consists of ideas. These ideas are the result of sensations. When we perceive objects their ideas are formed; so long as there is no perception there is no idea and, therefore, no object. Existence of objects depends on their perception. To be is to be perceived — *esse est percipi*. The sum of all reality consists of perceivers and perception, thinkers and their thoughts.

Idealistic proposition in its negative form states that nature is not independently real. The illusion of nature's independence is mainly based on the belief that objects which we perceive cause our perception. Subjective idealism asserts that an object is known and recognised through certain qualities. These qualities inhere in mind which perceives them. What is usually thought as the property of the object might be contributed by the mind even when the mind is unaware of doing so. Sensible objects are nothing but sensible qualities. When qualities are withdrawn there remains nothing sensible. That is why Berkeley declared that reality of sensible things consisted in being perceived. He rejected Locke's distinction between primary and secondary qualities and his assertion that primary qualities belong to things. According to Berkeley both primary and secondary qualities are in the mind. Perception and the immediate data of perception are analytically related.

With the motive of vindicating spiritualism and refuting materialism, Berkeley used his own logic and concluded that things perceived constituted solely of our ideas and hence are only mental. Perceiving is an act of creation and not purely an act of reception. According to the common sense view, things exist when perceived and also when not perceived. But according to Berkeley, it is not possible to affirm existence of a thing unless we know it and our knowledge of it takes place by virtue of perception. Sense perception not only reveals the things but also sets limits to the being of the objects revealed to us.

Berkeley is a subjective idealist because according to him all objects of knowledge are subjective of mind-dependent. They are in the form of ideas. There are two kinds of ideas, those resulting from the will of persons and those originating from the will of God. In the first category are images while in the second category are real objects. To the question what is reality, Berkeley replied only minds, spirits

or souls were real. God exists — and man exists God the infinite spirit and finite spirits of men. What we generally call Nature with natural laws is the divine mind acting upon our finite minds.

We may sum up the main points of subjective idealism. Objects do not exist independent of mind; their existence is dependent on their being perceived. Qualities of objects are like parts of objects and, therefore, like objects they also depend upon being known for their existence. However, objects still exist even when they are not being perceived by person. This is because God always perceives them and, thus, objects can exist independently of human perception; but not independently of divine perception. Objects appear to us as they are and they are as they appear. Knowledge of the objects comes to us directly without any intermediary factor. Everybody has his own experience of objects and, therefore, ideas are private. This is the subjective element in Berkeley's philosophy. But God can cause similar ideas in two different minds.

Transcendental Idealism

In order to improve upon subjective idealism and for giving a more mature interpretation of idealistic philosophy, Kant presupposed the dualism of phenomena and noumena. The world of objects is phenomenal. Phenomenal objects depend for their existence upon their being known. There is no existence of objects apart from sensory experiences. There can be no experience without sensation and no knowledge of objects without sensation. Thus, it follows that the only world we know is the phenomenal world subjected to time and space and open to sensory experiences. The phenomenal world exists for us due to the cooperation between sensory and conceptional aspects of our experience. Sensory impressions such as colour, solidity produce some qualities in objects while the mind contributes forms of perception such as space and time. Therefore all qualities of objects also depend for their existence upon the objects being experienced.

The knowledge man can have is confined to the limits of actual and possible experience. The metaphysical question as to what is real is replied by Kant by assuming the existence of objective reality at the back of phenomena and as the ground of all sensations. This he called noumena. Reality is noumenal in character and is unknown, unknowable through sensations which are the source of all our theoretical knowledge. Reality lies outside our experiences. Noumena is the thing in itself and objectively real. We know the real not as it is but as it appears through the mind's action upon sensations.

The questions like existence of God, the soul and its immortality, origin of the world transcend the limits of human experience. These belong to the noumenal reality and have to be assumed. Kant was an idealist since he did not accept the materialist view that the world of objects is the only reality. He was not a subjective idealist because he assumed existence of objective reality outside mind in the form of noumena. He was a phenomenalistic since he believed that all our knowledge is confined to the phenomenal world and is the result of mind's action upon sensations.

To conclude, it may be said that for transcendental idealism of Kant, objects are objects since they are experienced. Distinguishing the three faculties of sensibility, understanding and reason, Kant recognised their separate roles. Sensibility is the ability of the mind which causes us to perceive things as spatial and temporal. The faculty of understanding is directed to discover the obligation of mind to hold certain beliefs about the nature of things. The faculty of reason is necessary to give an account of the ideas of reason such as the idea of God, the idea of soul, the idea of the world. Thus, Kant tried to give a more balanced explanation of idealistic theory keeping in view the role and limits of human experience.

Objective or Absolute Idealism

Objective idealism is generally attributed to the German idealists Fichte, Schelling and Hegel. Retaining the valid point of subjective idealism, absolute idealism rejects the view that nature belongs to the private self. Objective idealism is sometimes described as the synthesis of naturalism and subjective idealism.

The real, according to Hegel, is thought or reason. The world is nothing but a great thought process. Nature is the expression of this thought process. The Absolute Reason reveals itself in outward form. Proper and full expression of thought is manifested in human self-consciousness. As for human knowledge what is outside experience cannot be known. Knowledge is confined to our experience. Objects of knowledge are relative to their subjects, the knowers. Objective idealism considers objects as independent as well as dependent.

Objective idealism emphasises the creative power of the mind in the sense that it interprets the experience of nature. Mind does not create the world but is capable of reproducing it. Objective idealism avoids the difficulties of both naturalism and subjective idealism. It claims to synthesize these two points of view. Retaining the main thesis of subjective idealism, the objective idealists recognise that

objects depend for their existence upon being known, apart from knowledge objects possess no existence. But they also emphasise that objects and subjects depend upon each other.

It is now clear that the idealists philosophers refused to accept the material world as the representation of the real. They emphasise the reality of mind, spirit and ideas. Idealists are spiritualists and moralists who repeatedly warn us not to be misled by the apparent reality of things. The world is full of contradictions. We must recognise the difference between what appears to be real and the actual reality. In India idealist philosophy found expression in the doctrines of Vedanta and Buddhism. Idealism explained the reality of self as the basis for unity in diversity. We are all united by the same unifying principle of the self. Perception of differences is the sign of ignorance and the cause of all our sufferings. Thus, Indian idealists gave practical implications of the belief in idealistic point of view. That is why Indian idealism could create greater impact on the world thought. Among the most rigorous schools of Indian idealism is the *Advaita Vedanta* of Sankaracharya.

Evolutionism

From the beginning of human civilisation, questions regarding the origin of the world, the universe, origin of life and the future of life on earth have occupied the human intellect.

Origin of the World

There are two hypothesis regarding the origin of life and other constituents of the universe. These are the hypothesis of *creation* and the hypothesis of *evolution.*

The Theory of Creation

This theory attributes life on earth to the creative activity of God who is supposed to be responsible for all that we perceive around us. The orthodox religious view of the world supports this hypothesis. In the West it is held that the world was created in six days and it contained from that time all the heavenly bodies, including animals and plants. It is further believed that after creation God told Adam and Eve, the first couple, not to eat the fruit of a certain tree. But they forgot the command and did eat the forbidden fruit. As a consequence God decreed that they and all their posterity should be mortal. Not only this, a specific date and time was set, i.e., 9.00 a.m. on October 23 in the year 4004 B.C., as the date of creation. This view of creation is also accepted by the orthodox people in India in a different form.

Creation is attributed to Brahma, one of the three gods. The other two Vishnu and Shiva are assigned the function of sustenance and destruction. In Indian culture these three gods are said to represent the three supreme values of life — Truth, Beauty and Goodness.

This hypothesis is not accepted by people with a scientific temperament due to its inherent contradictions. Rationally it appears to be ridiculous. Why did God create this World? There was time at the disposal of God before creation. Who created Time? God is considered all good, omnipotent being. Who created all the sufferings and evil of this world? Is it that before creation evil existed and God existed? If god created evil then. He can hardly be considered as good. The hypothesis of creation gives rise to many such questions which do not find any convincing answer. Ultimately, it is said that we must have faith in the existence of God as the ultimate source of everything including life on Earth.

The Theory of Evolution

The second theory is that of evolution. It is held that life on earth is the result of gradual evolution from inorganic matter. Evolution from inorganic matter implies a slow, systematic and gradual change during the course of natural process from earlier stages to later stages. Everything such as plants, animals, man and further, human mind and all its products like discoveries in the fields of science, arts and literature, social organisation and social institutions are the result of evolutionary process from the simple to the complex.

Biologists believe that life on the earth has existed since nearly one thousand million years. During this period, it has undergone a continuous change and transformation from its original condition of unicellular organism to the highly developed life of modern man. This process of change and transformation is called evolution. The world of nature may be characterised as a continuous process of development and change. This finds manifestation in everything in the physical environment and also in the life of man, society and culture. Evolutionists also believe that change during the course of evolution has been gradual, systematic and progressive. Evolution is defined as "a system undergoing irreversible change". Darwin used the term evolution in specific sense, that is, organic evolution — animals have evolved from earlier species of life.

Basic Principles of Evolutionary Theory

Evolution as it is defined has three basic principles. First, the change

which takes place occurs in time, it is a time taking process. Therefore, time is real and is not a figment of the mind as held by the idealists. Secondly, it is an orderly process from earlier to later stages, from simple to complex. Lastly, the change and transformation which takes place during evolution is caused by internal factors. There is nothing external which controls and guides the evolutionary process.

The different views about evolution advanced by philosophers and scientists from time to time may be treated in the form of some important theories. These are:

1. The Mechanical Theory of Evolution.
2. The Teleological Theory of Evolution.
3. The Creative Theory of Evolution.
4. The Integral Theory of Evolution.

The Mechanical Theory: This theory of evolution is supported by natural scientists. The world consisting of matter, life and mind has evolved from certain basic and primordial substance called atoms. It is argued that there is no point of assuming the existence of either any mysterious force or any teleology in order to explain nature of life since matter and motion are enough to account for all forms of life. This theory was first formulated by the Greek atomists and it was supported later on by Copernicus, Galileo, Newton, Darwin and Spencer. According to them mechanical forces governed by mechanical laws are operative in Nature and control the evolutionary process. Life, mind, reasoning, human society, religion, sciences and arts are the products of mechanical forces working in nature.

Charles Darwin accepted the mechanistic interpretation of evolution and extended it to the evolution of living species. Higher specie have evolved from the lower specie resulting from accidental variations within the cell body due to the operation of two principles — the principles of natural selection and the principle of the survival of the fittest. Darwin asserted that animals and plants increased in such a great speed that nature could not provide food to all of them. Hence, there is automatic operation of competition for survival and natural selection. Those who adapt to the environment prove fit to survive. In this process of adjustment and struggle to exist, species develop distinct traits and these get transmitted to the next generation. Variation in species is a matter of chance. Thus, there are three important features of Darwin's theory; accidental variation, transmission of such

variations through heredity and natural selection. These govern the evolutionary process.

Accepting the views of Darwin, Herbert Spencer gave a wider interpretation. The world, according to Spencer, is a great evolutionary process. The material of this process is drawn from matter, motion and force. The world we experience is the result of redistribution of matter, motion and force. Evolution implies integration and differentiation. The world in the form of a fiery mass got solidified through integration, and emerging natural phenomena was the result of differentiation. The whole process of evolution is mechanical.

Criticism: The mechanical theory of evolution tries to explain everything in terms of matter and motion. But life, mind, morals and will, purpose, interest, values cannot be explained in terms of mechanical laws. In fact it is very difficult to apply the evolutionary process to things that are non-material in nature like values, purpose, will and salvation since only material objects can be explained in terms of mechanical laws. The evolution of organic from inorganic cannot be taken as a matter of chance or a matter of accident. And no theory can be complete till it explains every aspect of the phenomenon under cosideration. A theory explaining something on the basis of chance or accident cannot be said to be coherent or complete.

The principle of mechanism cannot explain how a world of non-living things could produce living things. Darwin's theory of organic evolution asserts that higher types have evolved by the operation of two factors — the struggle for existence and the survival of the fittest. This concept of blind mechanical evolution exalted the selfish activity of the individual in his quest for survival and the door was closed on intelligent social cooperation for common good. This was a great moral weakness of the theory since it promoted individual hostility instead of social cooperation. In the words of Lewis, "This purely mechanical conception of evolution fails to comprehend the fact that things really change, while Nature may be mechanical at one level, at another level it may be purposeful. It is natural for rocks to be worn out, an entirely non-mental process. But it is equally natural for men to think, plan and change their environment."* Thus the mechanical theory does not fully explain the evolution of life.

The Teleological Theory: Scientific interpretation considers evolution as the result of antecedent conditions while teleological

* John Lewis: *Introduction to Philosophy*, Watt and CO; London, 1954.

interpretation involves a predestined purpose or goal towards which the gradual evolution of the world is progressing. From the metaphysical point of view, the evolutionary process consists of a sequence of events which are purposive in nature and involve the unfolding of a Divine Idea. The purpose towards which the evolution of the world is heading is the realisation of this Divine Idea. Samuel Alexander and Lloyd Morgan have interpreted evolution teleologically. There is increasing recognition of the idea that life has a purpose and, therefore, a evolution cannot be taken as a blind process.

The teleological interpretation of evolution is given by the idealists. The great German idealist, Hegel explained evolution in terms of this dialectics of thesis, anti-thesis and synthesis and the purpose of the dialectics was the realisation of higher and higher levels of perfection. The ultimate goal is the realisation of the absolute idea in history. Idealists have held that evolution is a process of achievement, and through different stages new and higher values have evolved. Life, mind, science, society and social institutions are these values. Evolution is a process of realising the values of life; it always promises a higher and better stage of civilisation. The whole process of development is heading towards an ideal. While on the physical level, evolutionary process does not reveal the intervention of any supernatural force or forces, evolution teleologically implies the emergence of new and higher stages of development. This has resulted in the development of matter from space and time, life from matter, mind from life. The sequence of events in the evolutionary process implies a purpose. Looking at things from even a common sense point of view, we know that everything in nature has a meaning and purpose. Nothing is absolutely useless. How can the great evolutionary process of nature be taken as a purely mechanical play of material forces without a goal? The world of nature is governed by the process of evolution in such a way that everything is directed towards a goal.

It is false to believe that cause and effect can explain the harmony in nature and the behaviour of living beings. Nature itself reveals a teleological character. Instead of being merely an accidental play of mechanical forces, the order, harmony and relation between the different phenomena of nature reveal the operation of reason. Not only organic but even inorganic nature has a purpose. Some philosophers consider teleology as external to nature. According to them, God gives purpose to the process of evolution. Lloyd Morgan believes that God causes emergents to emerge. But there is also a view that nature

evolves due to inherent purpose and force. In the words of John Caird, the world is "one organic whole, one self-evolving, self-realising idea".

The Creative Theory of Evolution: Henri Bergson, who formulated the creative theory, gave a revolutionary turn to evolutionary philosophy. Criticising Herbert Spencer's mechanical interpretation of evolution, Bergson said, "Spencer takes reality in its present; he breaks it to pieces, he scatters it in fragments which he throws to the winds; then he integrates these fragments and dissipates their movement. Having imitated the whole by a work of mosaic, he imagines he has retraced the design of it, and made genesis."* This is no philosophy of evolution. Facts from organic life at its different stages prove that mechanical interpretation of evolution is not correct. There are inherent contradictions in the mechanical theory.

Evolution, according to Bergson, is a creative process. It is not governed by preconceived ends as the determinists believe, but is actually the result of great explosive force of *elan vital* as the sole motive of developmental process. The creativity of evolution is similar to the creativity of artistic activity. An inner urge to act and to create a piece of art work motivates the artist though he is never sure as to what will satisfy him. Similarly, the life force of *elan vital* operates as the motive in creation and recreation during the evolutionary process. There is nothing definite about the future stages of evolution. But *elan vital* creates divergent paths for the development of living organism. At the initial stage, plants and animals were thrown up due to the working of the life force. In the case of plants, the latent energy was stored up without any mobility but animals made use of the energy and made rapid development. At the level of animals, there was further development in two directions giving rise to insects as purely creatures of instincts and the vertebrates. In the latter, intelligence took roots and developed in stages. Bergson pointed out that if the evolution of new species were really new then the new cannot arise as the result of mechanical shuffling of existing conditions. There must be a life force at work upon the stuff of Nature, moulding it into higher and newer forms of life. A vital force is acting upon matter.

Drawing facts from modern biology and psychology, Bergson's theory of creative evolution is based on extreme indeterminism. Lack

* H. Bergson: *Creative Evolution*, 1911.

of harmony in nature and behaviour of living organisms disprove determinism. Evolution is, therefore, not guided by preconceived ends but is the result of the explosive force of *elan vital* which creates divergent paths for the development of living beings. "There is an impulse driving it to take ever greater and greater risks towards its goal of an ever higher and higher efficiency."* This life force as postulated by Bergson is the only explanation of the mystery of evolution. The *elan vital* is supra-physical in character. Overcoming the resistance of matter, the life force enters into it and draws it towards life little by little. Bergson does not see any goal of evolution since nothing can be said about the future course of development. Continuous flux without ceasing and with the essence of time, indeterminateness and creativity mark the course of evolution. Thus, the creative evolution, according to Bergson, is ultimately responsible for the origin and development of species and the maturation of individual life. Life process is great creative adventure without a preconceived plan, and a prefixed goal.

The Integral Theory of Evolution: The integral theory of evolution given by the Indian sage philosopher Sri Aurobindo is both unique and interesting in many ways. After acquiring deep understanding of western science and Indian spiritual heritage, Sri Aurobindo tried to work out a synthesis of the truths of both the western and the eastern ideas on evolution. In a sense, ideas about evolution form the central point of Sri Aurobindo's whole philosophy. Giving a spiritual interpretation of evolution, he considered it a process of the revelation of the spirit. In the ceaseless process of development consciousness gets unfolded in matter.

Sri Aurobindo was of the view that the truth of evolution could not be explained by the various theories of the west. The materialistic theory proved self-contradictory since unconscious matter cannot evolve into life and consciousness. The biological theories given by Darwin and Spencer considered evolution as the progressive adjustment of the organism to its environment leading to the proper adjustment as the goal of evolution. This is too mechanical and cannot explain the birth of human consciousness and values. The creative theory of Bargson interprets evolution as a ceaseless process without a goal. It is aimless flow without a proper direction although the motive of evolution is *elan vital* or life force. Thus, while rejecting

* ibid.

mechanical theory, Bergson himself fell a prey to mechanism in not admitting an end or purpose of evolution. The idealistic interpretion evolution is also far from satisfactory since it considers reason as the highest principle, meaning thereby that there can be no evolution beyond reason.

Sri Aurobindo gave a spiritual interpretation of evolution and considered it an integral process of manifestation of grades of consciousness. Refuting the ideas of essential duality or contradiction between matter and spirit, Sri Aurobindo said that only the spirit existed. Matter, life, mind are all spirit in different forms.

The special significance of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy is its integral view of evolution. Evolution does not mean a process in which higher principles are added to the existing reality. On the other hand, evolution implies complete transformation of the lower realities at the emergence of higher principles. When life emerges matter does not cease to evolve. Both matter and life get transformed when higher principle of mind emerges. According to Sri Aurobindo the process of transformation with evolution is to go on till the supermind emerges and the entire cosmos of matter, life and mind is transformed. Thus, he visualised a radical transformation of the entire cosmos and, thereby, unimaginable possibilities on the earth as the result of the evolutionary process. This process of transformation is slow and complete transformation is not possible until the supra-mental gnosis emerges in material nature. A manifestation of the supermind and its truth — conciousness is inevitable; it must happen in this world. But there are two aspects to it — a descent from above and ascent from below, a self-revelation of the spirit, an evolution of Nature. The integral evolution implies that both individual and cosmos evolve simultaneously.

At present man has reached a stage of evolution where he is capable of knowing his present condition and can take steps to evolve upwards to the next stage, that of the superman. The whole of mankind is undergoing an evolutionary crisis in which choice about its destiny is to be made. On the one hand, we see enormous development in the fields of science and economic life, on the other hand we stand arrested and bewildered about the future of human race. The system of civilisation that man has created is proving too heavy for his limited mental capacity and understanding. To come out of this situation, a revolutionary change in human nature is an imperative. In the words of Sri Aurobindo, "If humanity is to survive, a radical

transformation of human nature is indispensable."* At the same time, he was a great optimist and said that as Nature has worked out man from animal, she might work out the superman, the God with the conscious cooperation of man. Unlike the traditional Indian view of liberation, Sri Aurobindo visualised cosmic salvation through cosmic evolution. Entire humanity has to be liberated by complete transformation of matter, life and mind. Salvation would mean rebirth of man into the Divine life. The ultimate destiny of man is to become superman. It is to attain divine transformation of his entire embodied existence, it is to achieve an unveiled manifestation of the Divine in human society.

Conclusion: In the end we may say that evolution appears to be a process of development in which step by step higher values are realised. Life, mind, science, social organisation and social values are the result of this process. Therefore, the idea of evolution has reinforced the hope of progress.

Pragmatism

Pragmatism is opposed to all forms of idealism and absolutism. In the later years of the nineteenth century and the early part of the twentieth century, William James and John Dewey in America and F.C.S. Schiller in Great Britain deviated from the traditional approach of philosophy and proposed a pragmatic mode of thought. Pragmatism as a philosophical school is against the purely logical and abstract bias of philosophy; its own approach is essentially practical. Philosophy, according to pragmatism, should be vitally related to human life and existence. All our theories are useless if they have no relation with our actual life and it's problem.

The term pragmatism was used by the American scientist and logician Charles Peirce (1839-1914) for the first time on the basis of suggestion he found in Kant's *Metaphysics of Morals*. In the later part of his life Kant felt the short comings of pure reason and accepted beliefs on the basis of practical reason. Thus, he was led to accept pragmatic conclusion. Pragmatis for Kant implied a methodolgy based on experience and related to human purposes. Drawing inspiration from Kant, Peirce said that meaning of reality and truth must be determined on the basis of their effects on practical life, beliefs and principles of actions. If we take the term pragmatism in its

Sri Aurobindo : *Life Divine*.

literal sense, it implies that each person should adopt beliefs which suit him in his practical life without any consideration of agreement with other people. Truth is relative to person and circumstances. The concept of absolute truth and absolute reality is, therefore, rejected by the pragmatists.

Everything, including knowledge and truth is to be determined by human consideration and utility. Rejecting the logic of traditional philosophy as barren intellectual exercise, pragmatism holds that our thought process must not be divorced from practical life. It is practical utility that determines the truth of belief. In the words of C.E.M. Joad, "Absolute truth is a figment of logicians, it is of no importance in practice." Expressing the spirit of pragmatism, William James said that a belief is true "so long as to believe it is profitable in our lives". Making human experience the basis of truth, pragmatists are humanists in the approach. As a contemporary school of philosophy, pragmatism rejected absolutism and brought philosophy from its transcendentalism to the empirical level of the common man.

Pragmatism represents the empiricist attitude and, therefore, makes concrete human experiences as the basis of all our knowledge. Consequently, it turns away from abstract thinking and the solutions of problems, from *a priori* reasoning, from fixed laws and closed systems. On the other hand, a pragmatist turns towards facts, concrete truth, actions. Pragmatism represents a method and an approach rather than a system of philosophy. Pragmatic method implies attitude of orientation, it is looking away from first principles and towards fruits, consequences and facts. In the words of William James, "Pragmatism has no dogmas, no doctrines save its method. No particular results then but only an attitude or orientation is what the pragmatic method means." As an attitude towards life pragmatism is too tole-rant. It considers a belief true which works successfully, false when it fails. Success and satisfaction are the criterion of the validity of a belief. Being realistic, pragmatism recognises that many of our ideas are true simply because they work successfully.

Prompted by the changing outlook on life and its problems pragmatism emphasises the need of accepting personal considerations in the matters of belief and knowledge. Thinking is a vital activity and it must be utilised for solving day-to-day problems of life. Therefore, it cannot take place in isolation from actual facts. We should think in order to live, in order to make life secure and happy. For this reason pragmatism reviews the aim and function of philosophy. Instead of

wasting time in picturing supernatural reality, philosophy should devote itself to dealing with existing and concrete problems of life. All our theories, ideas, and notions are useless unless they help in modification of human behaviour. Man is a complex constitution of instincts, feelings and emotions, and his life consists of success and failures, risks and uncertainties. He is under constant pressures from different directions. All his knowledge and actions must serve the ends of life. Philosophy must be used for life, here and now.

There are different types of pragmatists. Some are opposed to rationalism and some are opposed to agnosticism. Those who are opposed to rationalism reject the concept of eternal truth, *a priori* knowledge. Truth is created by human operations with the material furnished by human experiences. It is modifiable by experiences. Pragmatists opposed to agnosticism ridicule the attitude of helplessness. We should have positive attitude towards life. Pragmatism is usually considered as American philosophy. Ruggiero, a contemporary Italian historian said, "Pragmatism was born in America, the country of business, and is, par excellence the philosophy of businessman." But the pragmatic tendency in philosophy also found support in England, Germany and other parts of Europe.

Important features of Pragmatism

As a reaction against the existing notions of reality and knowledge, pragmatism is unique in many ways as compared to other contemporary schools. For a proper understanding, we can examine some of the main features of pragmatism and the distinct views of William James, John Dewey and F.C.S. Schiller.

The most important feature of pragmatism is that it is not interested in traditional philosophy. It is futile to discuss ultimate questions and the view of reality having no relevance to our concrete problems.

Pragmatism is inspired by actual human experiences. Therefore, the pragmatists derive their doctrines from concrete realities of life, directly experienced. They do not start with presuppositions, eternal truth and *a priori* knowledge. The notions of reality should be open to verification and modification with the help of experiences. Truth is a belief evolved through the test of individual and social experiences. A belief isolated from real conditions of life and not tested and verified in actual experiences has to be rejected. Verifiability through experiences is the real test of truth.

Pragmatism is opposed to absolutism, absolute truth, absolute

good, absolute reality. Everything is relative to time, needs and utility. There is a wide range of interests which govern our life. Workability and usefulness are to determine the relevance of a belief. Learning from experiences we should be able to modify our conduct for better adjustment. American pragmatists emphasise that a belief should help us in achieving success and in the formation of useful habits.

Pragmatism is a way of looking at life and its problems. It is not a systematic theory or doctrine. It is an expression of dissatisfaction with any view which implies denial of the reality of change, human freedom, individuality. It is a humanistic point of view and considers man as the centre of all knowledge. Pragmatism is a forward looking philosophy of life and gives hope of a better future if human considerations govern our attitude and beliefs.

The pragmatism of William James is typical in its formulation of practical philosophy and in its presentation. Being a psychologist, James laid great stress on the psychological interpretation of reality. Recognising the importance of the subjective factor in knowledge and truth, he said that individual satisfaction should be the criterion of truth. Therefore, any view of reality which ignores the individual factor is bound to be meaningless. Our beliefs are valuable and true if they influence our practical purposes, help in making progress and suit our general temperament.

Expressing his disapproval of logical and epistemological approach in philosophy, William James said, "Function of philosophy ought to be to find out what difference it will make to you and me, at definite instants of our life, if this world formula or that world formula be the true one.[1] He further said, "Pragmatic method is primarily a method of setting metaphysical disputes that otherwise might be interminable — to try to interpret each notion by tracing its respective practical consequences.[2] He made a forceful plea for the right of man to choose his beliefs. Manifesting the empiricist attitude, he said that all our knowledge is to be based on concrete human experiences. We actually know that our experiences and the criterion of truth is satisfaction. Our experiences verify and determine truth. "True ideas are those that we can assimilate, validate, corrorborate and verify, 'False' ideas are those that we cannot." Further, it is the usefulness of an idea

1. *The Philosophy of William James* : edited by Harace Mokallen, Modern library Books, 1938.
2. ibid.

that makes it valid. "Idea is useful because it is true, it is true because it is useful." "Any idea that will carry us prosperously from one part of our experience to another, linking things satisfactorily, working securely, simplifying, saving labour is true." Thus truth implies the existence of things which we directly experience as outside us and feel immediately through senses. It is clear from this account that James as a pragmatist emphasised practicability, workability, usefulness in actual human experiences as the sole standard of reality and truth. In all these, what is important is the subjective element.

Pragmatism becomes instrumentalism in the ideas of John Dewey and assumes a new dimension. As a pragmatist, Dewey also expressed his strong opposition to absolutist tendency in philosophy. Being progressive in outlook, he advocated the use of scientific method in all fields of human experiences as effective means of solving social, political and economic problems. Dewey also protested against the divorce of thought and action, theory and practice. Knowledge which is based on practical experiences cannot be treated in isolation. Knowledge has a proper role in human life as it helps in working out conditions in which individual can create values of decent living. Knowledge which does not contribute to better living is "a luxury and hence a social nuisance".

Man is a biological and social being. He is constantly engaged in the process of adjustment with the surrounding environment. Considering thought as subservient to action, Dewey said that thought has to be used as an instrument of action. It has to be used for promoting the interests of life. Being a progressive thinker, Dewey wanted to apply the method of science to every possible field of enquiry. The method of intelligence is the pragmatic or instrumentalist method. It is possible to test meaning and worth of ideas, customs, institutions in the light of their consequences through the scientific method. The social consequences of this approach leads us to the conception of a new society free from ignorance, insecurity, oppression and disorder. Outlining the subject matter and scope of philosophy, Dewey said it should be considered as theory of practice. It is constituted of definite ideas to be operative in actual life. Its central problem is to establish relation between beliefs about the nature of things and the beliefs about values.

Man is in the constant process of adjustment and this has led to evolution from earlier stages to the present civilised condition. Ideas are tools which help in adjustment and the consequent survival of the

human race. Intelligence consists in the ability to adapt to relatively new situations. All ideas are merely biological instruments which are more or less useful. On the other hand, if ideas do not serve useful purpose, they are just intellectual luxury. In the field of morals Dewey asserted that rightness of a conduct depended on social experimentation. "A moral rule which does not solve the existing problems should be abandoned." Rules of conduct, customs and moral concepts should be abandoned if these do not serve any useful purpose in the context of social life. Thus, it is clear that John Dewey laid stress on the practicability and usefulness of ideas and beliefs. He forcefully opposed absolutistic and idealistic approach as it did not serve the immediate needs, of man in the existing social conditions.

The humanistic aspect of pragmatic philosophy finds expression in the writings of British philosopher F.C.S. Schiller. Whatever is true must serve human interests and purposé since man is the measure of all things. Philosophy, according to Schiller, should not be a purely speculative affair but must serve a practical purpose. The method of philosophy should be scientific based on experience. Schiller protested against the attempt to depersonalise and dehumanise science and knowledge. Concrete human experiences are the testing ground of our knowledge and truth. Truth is human, conditioned by psychological interests and human efforts. Truth is not given readymade but is created by man. Therefore, all attempts to ignore the human factor in an effort to construct view of knowledge and values is found to be wrong. "Truth", says, Schiller, "to be really safe has to be more than individual evaluation; it has to win social recognition to transform itself into common property."

To Schiller, philosophy is not a speculative affair, but a practical attitude based on experience. He won the credit of introducing humanism as an explicit philosophy. "Reality", according to him, "lies in the belief in personal ego and the plurality of individuals." Influenced by the ideas of James, Schiller agreed with him in stressing that truth must be useful in life, must be serviceable. He also emphasised that truth is man-made, every truth must be human truth. Hence, the concept of eternally valid and timeless truth is rejected.

Conclusion

From this brief account it is clear that pragmatism is not a systematic doctrine. It is more a method, an expression of definite attitude, a way of looking at things and life. Negatively, it is an expression of dissatisfaction with any world view which refuses to recognise the reality

of change, individuality, evolution and human freedom in making choices. Pragmatism gives more importance to action over thinking and speculation. It represents a progressive outlook which views the universe as growing and developing. Pragmatists tried to bring down philosophy from the level of metaphysical discussions to the level of actual facts of human experiences. It asks men to recognise the hard realities of life and exhort them to use their intelligence in creating better conditions of life. Pragmatism represents a broad, tolerant and adaptable philosophy. The practical attitude, that 'any view which works successfully is true', directly appeals to common human reasoning. All the pragmatists expressed a concern for individual and social good and stressed on usefulness, practicability and workability of any theory or doctrine as the criterion for their acceptance. Therefore, they were nothing but realists. Many of our difficulties and sufferings are due to our unrealistic and impractical approach in life. Hence, pragmatism can be considered as the most suitable point of view and method for the man of today.

A Critique of Metaphysics

Returning to metaphysics once again, we can say it is a branch of philosophy which deals with the nature of reality. This reality is not given to the senses, and therefore, it cannot be empirically known. The senses can only perceive appearances. These appearances exist within space and time and operate in terms of cause and effect. Science investigates these phenomena. We thus come to basic distinction that has dominated philosophical inquiry since the times of Plato. The world as revealed to the senses does not constitute reality; it only constitutes appearances. Natural sciences study these appearances while metaphysics studies the reality hiding behind these appearances.

However, the distinction between appearance and reality started being questioned. With the beginning of anti-idealistic thinking during the latter part of nineteenth century and the publication of G.M. Moore's *Criticism of Idealism* the stage was set for a contemporary critique of metaphysics. If we make an objective survey of the history of philosophy we shall find that even the earlier philosophers had raised doubts about relevance of metaphysics. Gautam Buddha refused to answer metaphysical questions simply because they appeared to be irrelevant. Kant in the eighteenth century ridiculed the attempt to prove the existence of God by means of arguments and

criticised metaphysics in his own way. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the schools of realism, existentialism, logical positivism and pragmatism rejected speculative philosophy. The anti-metaphysical attitude of the contemporary age found it's most forceful expression in the doctrines of logical positivists who declared that metaphysics is constituted of nonsensical propositions.

Metaphysics can have no place in the scheme of human knowledge, because all intelligible questions which we can ask about reality must fall within the province of one or another of the sciences. But metaphysics deals with conceptions that cannot be tested experimentally like the facts of sciences. More detailed arguments against metaphysics were given by the German Philosopher Kant in the eighteenth century and by the logical positivists in the twentieth century.

Kant's Criticism of Metaphysics

Kant's treatment of metaphysics is both positive and negative. His negative treatment consists of his rejection of metaphysics. Kant is of the opinion that metaphysical propositions lie beyond proof or disproof. His further contention is that even if metaphysical judgements are meaningful, they are still quite different from the way in which the judgements of science are meaningful. Though Kant's negative criticism of metaphysics prepared the ground for the anti-metaphysical school of the recent past, yet it is of more than historical interest.

Kant characterises metaphysical propositions in three ways. Firstly, as regards their form, metaphysical propositions are synthetic and universal like the propositions of the natural sciences. Secondly, as regards their objects, metaphysical propositions are about unconditioned objects. And thirdly as regards their source, Kant says that they are unique and distinct because they are not generalisations from experience. He draws two conclusions from his conception of metaphysical propositions.

Firstly, he says that our intuitions and the understanding always represent objects given through sensibility as spatially, temporally and logically dependent upon other objects so given. Metaphysical propositions cannot be verified by an appeal to perception because, they are about unconditioned objects. Therefore, they cannot be proved or disproved in the same way that non-metaphysical propositions can.

Secondly, on the criterion of intelligibility, metaphysical propositions are incomprehensible and unintelligible, because the category of the unconditioned is not one of twelve categories of the understanding.

The distinction between the phenomenal and noumenal is the basis of Kant's criticism. According to him, *phenomena* refers to the world as known by us, and *noumena* refers to a transcendental reality that cannot be known by us. If we examine his arguments, we will find that he cannot succeed in establishing either the impossibility or the illegitimacy of inferences to noumenal objects, and so fails also to establish his own version of the case against metaphysics. David F. Bowers points out that "Kant's argument that metaphysics ought to be demonstrative because we are dissatisfied if it is less, is purely psychological in character and could only be coercive for one who, like Kant, had been trained in an extremely rationalistic tradition. Nor is it conceivable that anyone would seriously maintain that metaphysics must be demonstrative."

From Kant's criticism of metaphysical propositions, one must not draw the conclusion that for him there is no metaphysics at all. He goes to the extent of saying that even when science and all culture will disappear and the world will sink into barbarism, metaphysics will remain. At the conclusion of the Architectonic of Pure Reason in his book *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant says that metaphysics is "the full and complete development of human reason". Kant says that there is no metaphysics if we abstract reason from its determining ground or end, namely, the highest good. What he means is that there is no metaphysics for the purely empirical understanding.

Kant overemphasised the negative aspect of his logical enquiries, but it is not difficult to see why he did so. According to Prof. W.M. Urban, "It was a fatal day when Kant enunciated the thesis that he destroyed the pretensions of knowledge so as to give place to faith. But there was a certain element of justification for it. Kant had first to show the limits of the knowledge process when divorced from its ultimate end and norm before he could show its significance when directed by that end or norm. Kant never properly coordinated the two sides of his thinking, but he did suggest the way in which all such coordinations must be sought." So far as the negative treatment of metaphysics is concerned, Kant's age and our own offer no exception. Kant was confronted with the limitations of two traditions, empiricism and rationalism. It is time now to see what logical positivists say against metaphysics and how far they are consistent.

Logical Positivist's Criticism of Metaphysics

The anti-metaphysical school of logical positivism originated from the so-called Vienna Circle. There are two main features of this circle. Firstly, an extreme respect for science and mathematics, and secondly an extreme distaste for metaphysics. It was asserted that philosophers must give up the traditional mode of discussion on the problems that are non-empirical in character. It was further asserted that clarification, interpretation and coordination of the results of sciences is the true function of philosophy.

Philosophers belonging to the logical positivistic school feel that there is a strong contrast between metaphysics and natural sciences as well as mathematics. Dissatisfied with those pronouncements which refer to the supersensible, they have framed their criterion of literal significance with the aim of ridding philosophy of these pronouncements and making it intellectually more respectable. Following the empiricism of David Hume, the logical positivists say that metaphysical propositions are nonsense. According to them, there are only two kinds of meaningful propositions — logical or mathematical propositions and empirical propositions of natural science. Metaphysical propositions belong to neither of these two categories and, therefore, they are meaningless. A.J. Ayer puts the contention of logical positivism in a very clear and forceful way. He says, "One cannot overthrow a system of transcendent metaphysics merely by criticising the way in which it comes into being, what is required is rather a criticism of the nature of the actual statements which comprise it. We shall maintain that no statement which refers to a reality transcending the limits of all possible sense-experience can possibly have any literal significance, from which it must follow that the labours of those who have striven to describe such a reality have all been devoted to the production of nonsense."

For judging the literal significance of a statement, the positivists have devised the famous principle of verifiability. A statement has no literal meaning unless what it states is open to verification by sense observation. With the help of this principle, various metaphysical propositions are proved to be nonsensical. No conceivable observation can show that the world as revealed through sense-experience is unreal. The result is that anyone who says that the sensible world is a world of appearance as opposed to reality talks nonsense, if we judge it by the criterion of verifiability. The aim of the positivistic criticism is to show that philosophy as a genuine branch of knowledge must be distinguished from metaphysics.

On objective examination of this criticism we may say that the thesis of logical positivists about metaphysical propositions involves an extreme poverty of thought. The attack on metaphysics is an attack on the foundations of science. Instead of terminating old disputes, the positivistic hypothesis has merely added a new one, this time the factual linguistic dispute. The positivistic hypothesis leads to no understanding of how the metaphysical case differs from the normal one. Bradley is right when he says that any critic of metaphysics always brings a new metaphysics of his own.

Whatever the facts about metaphysics may be, there can hardly be any doubt that the belief in the positivistic hypothesis has its main source in the wish to disparage metaphysics. "To say metaphysics is nonsense is nonsense. It fails to acknowledge the enormous part played at least in the past by those systems."

The problems of metaphysics nourished the minds of philosophers for centuries. It has enriched human culture. The arguments of Kant and logical positivists are not parallel in their approach. Kant's aim was not exactly similar to the logical positivists. The attempt to reject metaphysics is bound to fail as it has always failed, because it is the product of human temperament, endowed with mystical and rational tendencies. So long as individuals remain and with them such temperaments, so long, I am sure, we will always have metaphysics and metaphysicians.

3

EPISTEMOLOGY

Nature and Scope of Epistemology

Epistemology as a term has its origin in Greek word *epistemo* and *logos*. *Episteme* means knowledge while *logos* means study or discussion. Thus, literally epistemology means discussion about knowledge. It is a branch of philosophy devoted to the problems of human knowledge. It deals with the conditions under which knowledge takes place. Epistemology is identical to theory of knowledge. The problems covered in the discussion of human knowledge are of special interest in philosophy.

Philosophy began as metaphysics. For the metaphysical problem regarding the nature of reality, no unanimous solution could be developed. Different answers were given as to what is real. While the idealists and spiritualists considered reality as spiritual in nature, the materialists put forward the contrary view that it was material in nature. This discussion on the nature of real led to the development of epistemology or theory of knowledge as an independent branch of philosophy. A basic question was raised: Can we know the real? What are the limits of our knowing? What are the sources of our knowledge? These are some of the basic questions which are dealt with in epistemology. It was realised by philosophers that epistemology as a critical reflection on metaphysics must be given due importance. Making epistemology the starting point of his philosophy, John Locke, the famous British empiricist said, "It came into my thoughts that we took a wrong course, and that, before we set ourselves upon inquiries of that nature, it was necessary to examine our own abilities and see what objects our understandings were or were not fitted to deal." Thus, Locke put epistemology as prior to metaphysics.

Problem of Knowledge in Western Philosophy

Knowledge is not a problem since we all feel that we know reality in the form of external objects. An average man thinks that his

knowledge is adequate and true. Knowledge is simple, immediate and objective. But problems arise when we want to verify our knowledge in actual practice. Mind is a knower,* but as consciousness it consists of thought, feelings, imagination etc. The process of ordinary knowledge begins with perceptions. Whatever we perceive are called percepts. These percepts develop into concepts and concepts into ideas. What we call knowledge is not only cognition but involves other modes of consciousness. Knowledge involves relation of percepts with thought. There is a subjective aspect of knowledge as there is an objective aspect. An average man does not attach importance to the subjective aspect. Epistemology as a branch of philosophy aims to discuss all aspects of knowledge including the limits of human mind.

Before discussing the various philosophical theories regarding origin and validity of knowledge, it is better to consider the problem from a commonman's point of view. Our knowledge of the external world is a matter of actual fact. It must be accepted as such without raising any doubt or question regarding its possibility. So long as we recognise this, there appears to be no problem of epistemology and no special justification for it as a separate branch of study. But the situation changes when we are faced with the fact that our sense experiences often lead us to error. Errors in perception is a psychological fact. To put it properly, the problem is that of error rather than that of knowledge. Epistemology as a separate inquiry may concern itself with the external world ignoring the self. But as Professor N.V. Banerjee put it, "In regard to the external world considered in itself the question of error does not arise anymore than that of knowledge. It is only in connection with its cognitive relation with the self that knowledge may take place or error may arise." Thus, epistemology as the enquiry concerning human knowledge has to presuppose the existence of self with the external world to justify itself.

Generally what we call knowledge consists of a relation between the knower and the known, the subject and the object. To say that we have knowledge of something means passing a judgement of fact, a cognitive judgement. In short, we can say that knowledge is a relational phenomenon. In this relation between subject and object some philosophers give primacy to the subject or the knowing mind and reduce the object to the modification of the mind. There are others who attach greater importance to the role of object in the process of

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* John Locke: *Essays Concerning Human Understanding*, Allen & Unwin, London.

knowledge and consider the knower as subordinate. There are yet others who move a step further and ignoring even commonsense, consider both subject and object as ultimate. For them knowledge is a process in which the true nature of the Absolute is unfolded. Without taking sides, we can say that both subject and object are involved in the process of knowledge. Objects known exist outside, but their existence is confirmed by the knowing mind. From this we can derive the following postulates of knowledge:

1. Knowledge is a relational phenomenon in which both subject and object are necessarily involved.
2. Objects outside us can be known and understood. The fact that we know things implies that they are knowable. It is immaterial whether they are actually known or not.
3. If we accept the judgement of commonsense, and there is no point in not accepting it, then our knowledge of objects must be taken as direct and immediate.
4. Knowledge is a cognitive judgement.

Keeping in view the historical development of philosophy in the West, we can formulate all the questions which epistemology tries to answer in the form of two basic problems:

1. The origin or sources of knowledge.
2. Truth and validity of knowledge.

Origin or Sources of Knowledge

The problem of origin of knowledge received attention from the Greek philosophers. The early Greek thinkers were rationalists. Democritus, the great atomist, declared that thought which transcends sense perception and appearances provided really genuine knowledge. Sense perception only indicates how things affect us but does not yield true knowledge of reality. The Sophists also recognised the mind of man as an important factor in the process of knowing. For them knowledge is more a subjective opinion and not objective truth. Subjectivism and rationalism characterise the Sophistic theory of knowledge.

Plato also gave primary importance to the problem of knowledge. Like the Sophists, Plato thought that for genuine knowledge we cannot depend on sense perception. Sense perception does not yield the true knowledge. Genuine knowledge is based on reason. For truth we have to rise beyond perception to the level of concepts. Following his teacher Socrates, Plato considered knowledge as the correspondence

of thought and reason. He distinguished four kinds of knowledge: conjectural knowledge, knowledge by belief, mathematical knowledge and dialectical knowledge. Conjectural knowledge is sensuous and only probable based on guesswork just as a mirage in a desert. Knowledge by belief is based on sense perception and is more reliable than conjectural knowledge. Mathematical knowledge proceeds deductively from definitions and unproved assumptions. It is hypothetical in nature. Dialectical knowledge rests on categorical first principles, not on hypothesis. It implies rational insight achieved through the dialectic method based on reason.

In Aristotle we find that different functions are assigned to experience and reason. Experience is considered as the basis of our knowledge since this world is the real world. But at the same time, it is emphasised that genuine knowledge does not consist in mere a acquaintance with facts; it is rather concerned with their reason and causes. Thus, in Aristotle we find a kind of reconciliation between empirical and rationalist points of view. Knowledge is impossible without experience, but truth derived from experience would not be certain, hence, we must have rational basis. Epicureans and the stoics following Aristotle deviated from rationalistic emphasis of the early Greek philosophers and considered sense perception as the only source of true knowledge. In this sense they were the pioneers of the empirical tradition. The role of mind, according to the stoics, is only to form general ideas and concepts.

Rationalist thinkers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries once again picked up the thread of early Greek philosophers who emphasised the importance of reason in the sphere of knowledge. Descartes, Spinoza and Leibniz were inspired by the mathematical side of modern science and tried to attain the same kind of certainty in metaphysics. Taking the lead, Descartes was the first to inquire into the ultimate presuppositions of knowledge. He expressed doubt in the validity of sensation and imagination and said that a great deal of what passed for knowledge could easily be shown to be capable of being doubted. But presuppositions of mathematics and geometry are beyond any doubt. Mathematical propositions are the example of most certain knowledge. Similarly, the existence of self is an absolute certainity — I think, therefore I exist.

According to the rationalists, reason has the power to penetrate the nature of reality in its own right. Reason is considered as the natural source of knowledge— knowledge is thought-centred. Human reason

recognises that there are certain basic principles from which, by deduction, we can acquire knowledge of the world. These basic principles have their source in reason and are not derived from experience. The basic principles of mathematics and physics are known to the mind as such, which perceives the nature of reality. The rationalists with Descartes, discovered that reason is successful in discovering absolutely certain propositions. Reason works on the raw material furnished by sense experience. Rationalists believed that reason which is successful in mathematics and sciences can be transferred to the field of philosophy. Spinoza considered the world as a rational system which can be known as such by reason. Both Descartes and Spinoza believed that the basic truths of reason were the basic truths of reality. Leibniz, like Descartes, and Spinoza, was a pure rationalist and believed that true knowledge was obtained by the use of certain absolute principles given to the mind and constituting the faculty of reason. Truth is reached not through senses but through reason. Rationalism asserts the power of reason and emphasises that it can solve all problems of philosophy.

Rationalism as a metaphysical system was built on *a priori* principles discovered by or found in the mind apart from sense knowledge. Against this view the empiricist theory traces the source and validity of knowledge to actual experience. According to this theory, all knowledge comes from experiences which determines its truth and validity. Empiricism completely rules out any knowledge of a transcendental world reached *a priori*. In modern philosophy, empiricism may be considered as a revival of the Epicurean attitude in early Greek epistemology. The empiricist theory was given a lead by John Locke who made epistemology the starting point of his philosophy.

Locke refuted the concept of innate ideas or innate knowledge. He believed that the human mind is a *tabula rasa* or a clean slate upon which experience writes. All knowledge is derived from experience and the method of knowledge is inductive, not deductive. The process of knowledge begins with sensations. Knowledge is concrete, ordered experience. The mind receives impressions, compares, analyses, unites, relates and eventually builds up general ideas. Our experience consists of sensations and reflections. While sensations give knowledge of the objects outside us, reflection is the source of knowledge of the internal states of mind. Knowledge consists of ideas and all ideas are derived either from sensation or reflection. Knowledge starts

with particular facts of experience and develops into generalizations. It does not start with innate ideas or self-evident truths as the rationalists think.

The empiricist tradition was carried forward by Berkeley and Hume who accepted the basic thesis of empiricism that all knowledge is based on experience. But in Berkeley it developed into subjective idealism. To him the very existence of knowledge implies the thing which is known as well as the knower. The logical development of empiricism is found in Hume. According to him, all knowledge comes from impressions and ideas. While impressions are formed due to sensations, passions and motions, ideas are the faint copies of impressions. The material of our knowledge is constituted of impressions and ideas and these are connected with one another by the laws of association such as similarity, contiguity and causalty. Discounting the concept of innate ideas, Hume stressed that impressions or sensations were the first units of knowledge. As a consistent empiricist, Hume admitted only particular facts of experience and said that we could not step beyond sensations to reality other than and outside them. Our present sensations depend on past sensations and, consequently, we can infer future sensations from the present. There is no absolute certainty in knowledge, it is only probable. Thus empiricism ends in scepticism, but this is the only logical outcome of the philosophy of Locke.

The question regarding the origin of knowledge is answered in the history of philosophy through four distinct ways. Out of these we have already discussed two, that is, rationalism and empiricism. The great German philosopher Kant tried to reconcile the claims of both reason and experience and thus avoided a one-sided view. According to him, knowledge is neither purely *a priori* nor wholly *a posteriori*. The material of knowledge is furnished by experiences and the form of knowledge is given by reason. Mind performs the function of synthesis and a system of knowledge is built. The world of objects which we know is a construction by our own understanding out of the materials furnished by experience. Thought cannot apprehend objects independently of perception, therefore, we can never know the world as it really is, we can know it only as it appears to our senses and through the mill of our thinking. Thus, Kant drew a limit to our knowledge. Knowledge comes through experience and reason but we cannot know the things-in-themselves. We know only what appears to us.

There are people who think that knowledge comes from direct

insight or intuition. Truth is revealed to intuition directly and immediately. The intuitionists discount the role of reason in giving us true knowledge. They believe that reason distorts reality. Intuition brings us face-to-face with reality. Intellect gives knowledge of only matter, it cannot give inner knowledge of life which is the core of our existence. Intellectual knowledge is false knowledge since it is conceptual, analytical, static and relative to objects. Intuition gives us a synthetic and total view of reality. The discussion on the sources of knowledge may be closed with a word of caution. Knowledge is a complex process in which both senses and reason play their respective roles. In this process, we cannot ignore the knower or the known and the other conditions in which knowledge takes place. In the words of G.T.W. Patrick, "the self, with certain innate interests, an environment with which the self enters into relations, an intelligence that can fund, capitalise and organise this experience, can deal effectively with new and complicated situations. Knowledge is funded experience, but in the funding process mental powers and activities are the significant things — memory, thought, conceptual analysis, reflection, organisation, creative synthesis."* Thus, knowledge is neither purely a result of sense impressions nor a product of reason but the outcome of interaction between self and environment.

Truth and Validity of Knowledge

The problem of validity of knowledge may be posed in the form of two questions. Is the knowledge which we generally have of things valid? Is the world which we know through our tools of knowledge real?

What we call knowledge is generally understood as knowledge of the external world, i.e., the world of objects which lie outside us. Psychologically, knowledge is any act of sensation, imagination, perception, thought, reasoning and so on. But the idealist thinkers do not accept this basic position. According to them, our knowledge of the external world is nothing short of a fiction. The knowledge which we have through sense perception is not valid and the world which we perceive is not the real world. Berkeley refused to recognise the reality of objects apart from perception. What we call knowledge of the external world is not a valid knowledge. Everything is mind-dependent. Idealism asserts the subjectivity of sense qualities. For example, beauty of the rainbow is in our vision rather than in the sky. Nothing is known to us except ideas. Berkeley said, "This external world which you suppose exists independently by yourself is first of

* G.T.W. Patrick: *Introduction to Philosophy*

all a world of colours. But colours are subjective, they are in you, not in the thing you see." But this extreme view of subjective idealism is not acceptable.

The world which we know has always existed and has created us, the knowers. This world is a real world and our knowledge of it is true even if partial. Our knowledge is ever enlarging by the application of scientific methods of investigation. This is realistic view which we can hardly deny. We know with absolute certainty the existence of the natural world. Our knowledge of the world is a matter of actual fact. There is no doubt that sense experiences sometimes lead to error instead of knowledge. But the errors are committed not due to objects but due to perceiving mind. The realists refute the idealist view that in the process of knowing, the subjective aspect is always more important than the objects that are known. In fact our knowledge is confined to the external world and it is the only valid knowledge.

The position of the realists regarding the truth and validity of knowledge appeals to our common sense. Objects are located in space and time and we come into direct contact with them. These objects do not depend for their being on our act of knowing or perceiving. Perceiving something is knowing that thing. Knowledge is a distinctive type of activity that belongs to human beings. The act of knowledge constitutes a thing actually known —knower and known share the same act. Knowing implies an object, that which is other than the subject. Knowledge is far from being a merely subjective modification. Mere subjective knowledge is imperfect, even false. Knowledge is perfect when it attains truth, when it is assimilated to, and is identical with, the thing known. The world is externally related to ourselves as knowers. The relation of knowing establishes a direct contact between the mind and the physical object. Perceptual know=ledge involves no activity or creativity on the part of mind or the thing perceived. Common sense does not recognise anything as the action of external objects on the mind. Contemporary realism is even more emphatic in asserting the common sense view. Knowledge is not mediated by any mental state. Real objects are directly presented in knowledge. In the act of knowing, the objects of knowledge are pre-sent to us as an actual outer independent reality.

Problem of Knowledge in Indian Philosophy

Indian philosophers attached greater importance to the problem of

knowledge as compared to the Western thinkers. Philosophy is called *darshana* or direct insight into the nature of reality. Thus, knowledge of reality is the primary objective of any philosophical thinking. Knowledge as opposed to ignorance is the means of liberation — the ultimate goal of man recognised by Indian philosophy. Knowledge is considered as one of the essential conditions of liberation. According to some traditions in Indian philosophy it is actually the state of liberation. In the Upanishads, Brahman is described as knowledge and bliss. Knowledge has been identified with light and ignorance identified with darkness. The moment there is light in the room, everything becomes visible. Similarly, the moment there is knowledge, all false notions disappear and truth reveals itself. For this reason, in the ancient times Indians used to pray to God for leading them to light from darkness *(Tamaso ma Jyotirgamaya).*

There is another dimension in which epistemology has been treated in Indian philosophy. The problems of origin and validity of knowledge are dealt with by all the schools of Indian philosophy. Philosophy as an inquiry about the nature of universe starts with inquiry about the nature of man — the knower. The question of knowledge cannot be separated from the way of knowing. Therefore, the modes of knowing have been discussed by Indian philosophers in great detail. Besides this, it is said that what is required is not mere knowing but correct knowing. Hence, knowledge and the tests of knowledge are considered as associated problems. To do justice to all these issues of epistemology, it is necessary to examine in depth the views of various schools of Indian philosophy.

Caravaka Philosophy: The materialist and atheistic school of Caravaka took an unorthodox approach in dealing with logical and epistemological question. The Caravaka philosophers emphatically refuted the existence of any reality other than the world of objects. All our knowledge is confined to this world. Perception is recognised as the only valid source of knowledge and it is the result of direct contact between the senses and external objects. The other sources of knowledge such as inference, testimony, analogy and scriptures do not furnish certain knowledge. What we know through these sources is always doubtful and uncertain. Inference is a leap in darkness. It is based on perception and may be accidentally true. Inference of fire from the perception of smoke is very much doubtful. The certainty which is found in perception is not found in inference. According to Caravaka thinkers, testimony cannot be accepted as a valid source of knowledge since direct verification of testimony is not possible. It is more doubtful than even inference. Knowledge by analogy has no validity at all as it is based on points of comparison. The Caravakas do not accept the authority of the *Vedas*, hence, scriptures cannot be a valid means of knowledge. Thus, adopting a common sense view, the Caravakas consider sense perception as the only valid means of knowing the truth relating to the physical world. They reject the ideal of liberation as the supreme end and knowledge as an essential precondition for liberation. There is nothing like liberation from the realities of life. The idea of liberation is only to deceive innocent people. All our knowledge is limited to this world and is the result of immediate contact between the senses and objects.

Jainism: The unorthodox school of Jainism gives prominence to the problem of knowledge. Metaphysics, for Jainism, is based on epistemology. Making an interesting analysis of human knowledge and the sources of it, Jainism distinguishes between immediate *(aparoksa)* and mediate *(paroksa)* forms of knowledge. Immediate knowledge is further classified into three kinds such as direct knowledge of things *(avadhi);* direct knowledge of the thoughts of others *(manahparyaya)*; and absolute knowledge *(kevala)*. These three forms of knowledge constitute extra-sensory perceptions as immediate knowledge is direct knowledge. The soul has knowledge unaided by the senses and mind. While the first two kinds of knowledge are open to all human beings, absolute knowledge can be acquired by only liberated souls.

Mediate *(paroksa)* knowledge is also divided into perceptual knowledge and knowledge based on authority *(mati and shruti)*. There are two sources of perceptual knowledge: perception and inference. Jainism does not recognise the authority of the Vedas, hence, for them the Jain scriptures constitute the valid source of right knowledge. Thus, perception, inference and authority are recognised as the sources of mediate knowledge.

The Jain philosophers deal with knowledge in yet another way. For them knowledge may be of a thing in relation to thought. These are called *pramana* and *nyaya*. When we know a thing in different ways and through different qualities, knowledge is *pramana. Nyaya* is knowledge of a thing in a particular relation with the knower. It is relative knowledge. Truth, according to Jainism is relative to our standpoint. Each object possesses many qualities. One may apprehend one of these qualities as knowledge of the object. One makes state-

ment about a thing on the basis of his distinct standpoint of knowledge of *nyaya*. There are seven *nyayas* and each *nyaya* represents only one aspect out of the many aspects of reality. On the basis of this, the Jain philosophers developed their theory of *Syadavada* and *Saptabhangi nyaya*.

In this brief account of knowledge given by the Jain philosophers, what is significant is their comprehensive and realistic approach. While recognising perception and inference as valid sources of knowledge, they assert relativity in practical life. Absolute knowledge, the knowledge of thing in itself, is possible when one attains liberation, the ultimate goal set for human beings in this world.

The Orthodox Schools: Besides Caravaka and Jainism, the orthodox schools of Nyaya-Vaisesika, Purva-Mimamsa and Vedanta treated the epistemological problems as inseparably related with metaphysical issues. The problem of origin of knowledge which is favourite subject of Indian philosophy received special treatment by thinkers of orthodox schools.

The Nyaya View: Being realistic and logical in a approach, the Nyaya school emphasises the common sense view of reality. Knowledge, according to the Nyaya thinkers, is manifestation of objects. Objects are distinct from subjects and exist independently. Things exist, not because they can produce an impression on our mind or serve our purpose, but because existence is their basic characteristic. Things would continue to exist even if they are not perceived by us. Knowledge is an effect produced by physical and intellectual causes taken together.

Knowledge may be valid or invalid. The test of valid knowledge is right apprehension of objects as they are. Thus, in order to be valid knowledge must-correspond to reality. Nyaya school admits four sources of valid knowledge such as perception, inference, comparison and testimony.

Perception is the most important source of knowledge since the purpose of knowledge is revelation of objects. The process of perception, according to the Nyaya-Vaisesika, implies contact of senses with objects, appreciation of usefulness and clarity. Perception gives right knowledge of things as they are. The mind, according to Nyaya, is a separate sense which perceives pleasure, pain and desires.

Inference is preceded by perception since it is not possible without perception. It is cognition which presupposes some other cognition. From knowledge of the sign we get a knowledge of the object possessing it. For example, the inference of fire from the perception

of smoke. For Nyaya, inference is the only dependable means of philosophical knowledge. Inference may be from cause to effect, from effect to cause and also from perception to abstract principle. But it may be pointed out that inference has no place where perception is possible and available.

The third source of knowledge is comparison and it is based on the relation between a name and the object denoted by that name. It is knowledge on the basis of some common property or similarity between two objects. Testimony comprises statements from absolutely reliable sources. If some individual, who cannot be doubted, possesses knowledge of truth and presents this knowledge for the good of humanity, his words should be accepted. In all orthodox schools of Indian philosophy, the *Vedas* are the source of knowledge by testimony.

Knowledge, according to the Nyaya school, is invalid when it implies memory, doubt, error and hypothetical reasoning. Memory does not constitute true knowledge, because the object of knowledge is not present and, therefore, there cannot be total certainty. Erroneous knowledge does not correspond to external objects and hypothetical reasoning is conditional and, hence, false.

The Nyaya view of knowledge is endorsed by the Vaisesika school with special emphasis on Visesa or particularity. The perceptible world is recognised as a reality independent of the knower. All gross objects are within the reach of perception which includes intuition as well as recollection. According to the Vaisesika school, there ore only two valid sources of knowledge — perception and inference.

The Vew of Purva-Mimamsa: The problem of knowledge is treated by the school of Purva-Mimamsa in great detail. With the interpretations of Kumarila Bhatt and Prabhakara, Mimamsa philosophy made valuable contributions to the field of logic and epistemology. The knower, the object known and the resulting knowledge are all involved simultaneously in the process of knowledge. Besides this, all knowledge according to the Mimamsa school, whether perceptual or inferential, must necessarily reveal the knower as well as the object of knowledge. Later Mimamsa philosophers subscribed to a unique epistemological view that all knowledge is self-validating and, therefore, *ipso facto* true. It is not the truth of cognition but its falsity which is proved by knowledge. "The attempt to confirm knowledge through a search for falsity is the main trend of the Mimamsa theory of knowledge." Absence of cognition leads to error.

To the usual four sources of knowledge such as perception,

inference, comparison and testimony, the Mimamsa philosophers add implication and non-apprehension. It is of special significance that in the epistemology of Mimamsa, non-apprehension is recognised as a valid mode of knowledge. In Kumarila's philosophy, there is an interesting discussion on non-apprehension. When a thing is not perceived, its non-existence is implied *(abhava)*. The statement that "the object does not exist" is a kind of cognition. To put it differently, the man Mr. X is not at home implies that he is outside home and, thus, this an addition to our knowledge about Mr. X. Since the Mimamsa epistemology starts with the premise that all knowledge is in nature true, illusions are the result of non-discrimination between different cognitions.

Kumarila defines knowledge as apprehension of an object which is produced by causes free from defect and is not contradicted by subsequent knowledge. Prabhakara defines valid knowledge as apprehension *(anubhuti)*. Prabhakara sticks to the basic position of the Mimamsa that reality can never be known as other than what it is. As for the sources of knowledge, perceptual knowledge is the result of actual contact between the object and the senses. Inference in both the Nyaya and the Mimamsa means the same thing. Comparison is recognised as an independent source of knowledge and it is based on the similarities between past and present perception. Testimony as source of knowledge implies the acceptance of knowledge provided by a person who is reliable.

Uttara Mimamsa or Vedanta: In Uttara-Mimamsa or the Vedanta philosophy, the problem of knowledge is treated both from the transcendental and the empirical points of view. Knowledge is opposed to ignorance and is the only means of realising the Absolute Reality. According to the Advaita Vedanta of Sankara, there are three kinds of existence — ultimate reality, empirical existence, and illusory existence. The various means of knowledge do not give real knowledge. They only remove ignorance. Real knowledge aims to reveal the nature of Ultimate Reality and it is beyond the ability of subject and object. It is self-illumined, self-evident and self-validating. The moment the veil of ignorance is removed, Reality reveals itself without any mediating factor. Knowledge is always existent, only ignorance keeps it covered, keeps it unnoticed.

At the empirical level of existence, a distinction is made between the knower, the known and knowledge. While valid knowledge is beyond contradictions, the various sources of knowledge such as perception, inference etc., give us knowledge which is not absolute.

But empirical knowledge has practical validity and utility. Subject and object remain separate due to ignorance. Absolute knowledge is the consciousness of the identity between the subject and the object. The same consciousness exists in both the subject and the object which appear different due to ignorance. Inference is the knowledge which results from past experience and is based on the consciousness of concomitance between the two terms, subject and object. Testimony of the scriptures is admitted as an independent source of knowledge by Advaita Vedanta. As for the relation between inference and scriptures, Sankara gives more importance to scriptures than to inference, according to Prof. R.D. Ranade. Reason which constitutes inferential knowledge has its own limits. Reason can operate as a valid means of knowledge only on the empirical level; it has no validity in the case of knowledge of Brahman.

Thus, it may be said that at the transcendental level, knowledge is true when it is beyond contradictions. Knowledge implies revelation of the Absolute. There is no question of employing means for it. All knowledge of finite things, in terms of Advaita Vedanta, is the imposition *(adhayasa)* of objects upon pure being. Knowledge produced by the sources conforms to its objects. Erroneous perception illustrates the case of illusory existence. For example, a rope can be mistakenly perceived as a snake.

Following Sankara, Ramanuja recognises three sources of knowledge. These are perception, inference and scriptures (testimony). At the same time, he agrees with the Nyaya and the Mimamsa that all knowledge points to a corresponding object existing independently of it. But Ramanuja asserts that knowledge belongs to, and exists for the self. It is like light while the self is like a lamp. As for validity, all knowledge is intrinsically valid and can never err. It always corresponds to its object. Our knowledge is generally imperfect and partial as it does not encompass the whole of reality. The possibility of knowledge is obscured by ignorance *(avidya),* till the knower is freed from all defects. Then knowledge is complete and comprehensive.

Thus, we see that the problem of the nature and validity of knowledge has been treated in great depth by the different schools of Indian philosophy. Different aspects of the problem have been highlighted in detail and the contributions of Jainism, Nyaya-Vaisesika and Purva-Mimamsa are particularly noteworthy. In Advaita Vedanta epistemology is given a subordinate place below metaphysics, but the importance of true knowledge is emphasised.

4

ETHICS

The Nature of Ethics

The history of philosophy presents us with three main questions: What is the nature of ultimate reality? Can we know the real? What ought we to do? The first two questions are dealt with in mataphysics and epistemology. The last question concerning the problem of human conduct is treated in ethics.

Man is a rational animal. He is also a social being. As he lives in society, his actions are bound to influence others. Actions and their consequent reactions in society create a situation in which judgements of right or good are passed on them,. "Ethics", according to Prof. Mackenzie, "is the study of what is right or good in conduct."[1] Ethics as a branch of philosophy and as a science "deals with human conduct in so far as it is considered right or wrong, good or bad."[2] A Greek word, *ethos* is said to be the basis of the term ethics. *Ethos* meant customs and usages belonging to some social group. Thus, the term ethical or moral first appeared in the sense of customs, but gradually expanded its connotation to include all actions of normal human beings performed willingly, consciously and with the sense of possible consequences. Used in this sense, ethics has acquired great significance with the evolution of human civilisation and with the increasing complexity of human society.

As a rational being, man is engaged in the process of building up a life of reason. Moral growth in human society is characterised by a process in which man becomes more rational, more social and, finally, more conscious of his actions, his rights and duties towards others in society. Thus, the most important thing to know is, what is good and what is right. There are right and wrong ways of acting and behaving. The purpose of ethics is to enable us to distinguish between right and wrong actions. Taken in this sense, it is obvious that ethics

1 Manuel of Ethics
2 ibid

is of great importance because questions of right or wrong, proper or improper, are involved in all spheres of human activity. Ethics as a discipline is occupied with the problem of the ideal of human conduct, with what ought to be. When conduct rises from fact to an ideal, it becomes ethical.

Human nature is a complex constitution of reason, will, emotions, instincts and impulses. While man is often inclined to make use of his rational faculty due to cultural and educational influences, he is also susceptible to ordinary temptations in life. His instincts and impulses exercise a powerful influence on his behaviour. Thus, man can be easily led astray from the right course of rational behaviour towards instinctive and impulsive actions as observed in the case of animals. In other words, there are two alternatives before man: either he is guided by rational considerations and thus, achieves perfection in his conduct as a responsible social being, or he ignores his rational nature and follows his instinctive disposition and prefers to lead a life of lower animals. Due to these two opposing possibilities, ethics assumes great relevence for human actions. Ethics as the study of values aims to evaluate human conduct in terms of good or bad, right or wrong under the standards of society. Evaluation means determining the value. Ordinarily, human actions fall short of expectations. Most of our actions, when examined in relation to values, are found to be much below the required standard of human behaviour. The judgements which men usually pass in terms of right and good are meant to create a consciousness about the desirability or otherwise of actions. When a school boy or girl speaks a lie, the teacher admonishes and suggests that speaking the truth is good and desirable, not speaking a lie. In every home, ethical judgements are passed to regulate individual conduct. Used in general sense, the term good implies favourable or beneficial results. Goodness is related to social utility. Speaking the truth cannot harm anybody even if it fails to produce beneficial results. Similarly, the term right drawn from *rectus* implies action according to accepted rule or law of society. Keeping in view the common good, every society has evolved norms, standards or principles of behaviour. Thus, an action is good and right if it produces beneficial results and is accepted or approved by the society.

As compared to philosophy, ethics is a more familiar term and is used by even those who have no conception of philosophy. In common usage we are familiar with practical ethics rather than with ethical theory. Ethical commands are a part of every culture. But as a

discipline, ethics seeks to investigate all aspects of human conduct, theoretical as well as practical. Ethics is concerned with the basic concepts of morality like rightness, goodness, duty, responsibility, justice, virtue, conscience etc. Ethics is not only concerned with examining, judging and estimating the normal quality of human conduct but also with reflection on the nature of values. It is both a critical and an objective evaluation of conduct performed by normal human beings in society. A man who lives away from the society (though this is a ridiculous supposition) needs no ethics since his actions, even if undesirable, do not adversely affect the life of others. We live in society, therefore, our actions are under constant scrutiny by others. Besides this, ethics deals with human conduct, not human behaviour. Conduct refers to voluntary actions performed by conscious human beings who can visualise the possible consequences of their actions. Thus, involuntary or reflex actions as well as actions performed under external compulsions cannot be ethically judged. Morality presupposes freedom of the will. Where freedom of choice between right and wrong actions does not exist, moral responsibility cannot be imposed. For this reason, the German philosopher Kant accepted freedom of will as a necessary postulate of morality along with the existence of God and immortality of the soul. Although freedom of the will cannot be established through arguments, it has to be presupposed because of practical necessity. Ethical questions are essentially linked with choice. For this very reason there are ethical standards prescribed for people in all walks of life. But ethical judgements are neither possible nor desirable if conduct is not performed voluntarily and consciously.

For those who wish to make a systematic study of human conduct in order to make value judgements, it is necessary that they take a historical view of the problem. Human conduct has evolved during the course of the long history of human civilisation. With the evolution of conduct, ethical standards have also changed. In the earliest stages of civilisation when man entered into an organised life they drafted certain ways of acting common to a group. The aim was to guide and control the behaviour of all members in a social group in order to maintain right and harmonious relations between them. Handed down from generation to generation, those approved ways of doing and acting acquired the name of *customs*. Thus, customs became the ultimate standards of all moral judgements. Breaking a custom meant going against the social norms of behaviour. By means

of public opinion, taboos, rituals and physical force, society enforced customary standards on all its members.

The basis of customary morality is the social instinct and the inborn tendencies of sympathy and initiativeness. A striking characteristic of the development of customs was the shift in emphasis from the individual to the community. It is somewhat difficult for us to put ourselves in the position of a man at the level of customs where he had association with only one group, a kind of an enlarged family before which he felt completely powerless. During this stage an individual could not go against the norms of right and wrong which were customary to the community. These were the result of the collective experience of the group and no one could apprehend any harm from them. These customs also proved to be a great binding force and unified individuals into an integrated social life. Lastly, customs contributed to the development of sociability, benevolence, sympathy and fellow feeling among the different members of the society.

In a way, the development of customs and their enforcement as criteria of ethical judgements was a preparation for the next stage of morality. This stage can be characterised as reflective morality. Gradually it was felt that customs could not cope with the rapid changes in the conditions of life. Customs often made trivial factors more important against an objective estimate of the value of individual actions. The morality of customs made use of two factors which we do not consider desirable, namely fear and resentment, fear in avoiding taboos and resentment in other members of the society. Customs, therefore, became habitual behaviour as no one could think of going against them. But this concept of customary morality goes against the concept of human freedom. It is now felt that there is a close relation between individual freedom and morality. In the words of John Dewey. "Complete morality is reached only when the individual recognises the right or chooses the good freely, devotes himself heartily to its fulfilment, and seeks a progressive social development in which every member of society shall share." Group morality under customs ignored individual volition and choices, laying emphasis on steadiness by habit and social pressure. Thus, the advance from the level of customs to that of conscience or reason was characterised by the substitution of rational method of setting up moral standards in place of a passive acceptance of customary norms. Reason or rational morality also emphasised individual volition and personal choice in

place of forced identification with the group welfare. This set the ground for individual development. The process of transition from customs to conscience was further accelerated by the developments in the field of science, psychology and economics. Science revolutionised human thinking and psychology revealed new facts about human nature. Mankind also realised the importance and role of economics and political factors in matters of social relationship. It was felt that morality was not only a social matter but also an individual concern, and values were relative to time, place and conditions. Thus, there was a gradual shift from the authority of moral life outside the individual in the group to the moral authority inside the individual.

However, on an objective analysis of the present situation we find that even today morality is largely a matter of custom with only a few individuals reflecting on moral matters. It is a social gain if men accept the standards set by their group, because if everybody starts questioning the norms of right and wrong, instability in morals will result which could further lead to confusion and degeneration. The moral traditions of the group would also become undermined. Even the most rational person accepts tradition so long as it is not inconsistent with the highest moral aspiration of his own nature and that of the group. Many of the moral standards which prevail at the level of customs must have originated in the reflection of some individual in the past. Individualism in ethics with greater freedom in conduct has put fresh responsibilities on man. In framing moral norms, man is to be guided by culture as well as the new concept of values for rational social relationships. The moral crisis which is prevailing in the world today is a result of the transitional phase through which mankind is passing.

In the present age of science and technology we find little regard for higher values of life. Moral chaos and confusion is causing great tension in human relationships. This is particularly serious because nations of the world depend on each other for their development. The only way out is greater emphasis on the importance of moral values. For this ethics as the scienctific study of values must be given an important place in the scheme of knowledge. The aim of ethics is to develop moral sense in men and women so that they are able to distinguish between proper and improper actions. Morality is essential for happiness. To be moral is to be happy. Here happiness is taken in a broader sense, not as mere physical pleasure. The ideal of greatest

good for greatest number should guide us in our day-to-day life. One of the reasons for the present crisis is that we are often tempted to sacrifice the greater good for narrow personal gains. Only ethics can impart a social sense which is essential for social harmony and individual happiness.

Ethical Problems in Relation to Politics and Society

In the changing socio-political and economic conditions, ethics and ethical problems need to be viewed in a new perspective. In the modern world several important ethical problems arise out of the inter-related moral, social, political and economic conditions. We are living in dynamic social conditions with increasing awareness of social and political rights. The slogans of justice, freedom and equality have been translated into practice with the new wave of democracy during the last fifty years. Consequently, feudalism and colonialism have been swept away from large parts of the world giving rise to democratic and socialist systems of government. It is a well recognised fact that social conditions enter integrally and intrinsically into the formation of character, that is, in the making up of desires, purposes, judgements of approval and disapproval. In other words, social and political systems influence individual thinking and behaviour. In slave societies people submit to the will and whims of those who rule. They have no opportunity of free thinking. Consequently, transformation and development of conduct is not possible. But with the formation of free societies based on recognition of the right of equality, an atmosphere has been created in which overall development of individual and social behaviour is possible. The conception of common good and general well-being worked as a great force in the evolution of societies based on democratic ideals. Democracy signifies on the one hand, that every individual is to share in the duties and rights to control social affairs, and on the other, social arrangemente are to eliminate those external factors such as status, birth wealth etc. which restrict opportunities of individual development. On the individual side it demands strict obedience to laws and on the social side, cooperation and voluntary sharing of responsibility. In the form of an ideal of social life in its political phase, democracy is much wider than any form of government. Democracy as a moral ideal is an attempt to unite liberation of individuals with the idea of common good. Liberty, equality and fraternity, the motto of the French Revolution, represent

basic social values.

Unfortunately, history proves that liberty and equality do not automatically generate a sense of brotherhood. Granting liberty to all has a tendency to produce inequalities since people with superior capacities and opportunities rise in comparison to those with lesser capacities. The greatest ethical problem in free societies is how to harmonise the development of each individual with the maintenance of a social state in which the activities of one will contribute to the good of all others. It is now observed that formation of self-government is not a sure guarantee of justice for all sections of society. There are some inherent contradictions in democracy itself. Widespread political apathy and indifference is brought to light when only half of the electorate exercise the right of franchise. This is because they feel that the so-called government of the people is ultimately the government of the majority party whose only interest is to remain in power for as long a period as possible. The problem of political corruption, unequal distribution of wealth, delay and even denial of justice to socially and economically poor people in the society have disillusoined people in many countries of Asia and Africa. The wide gap between political theory and actual political conditions has given rise to very serious moral problems. This situation is partly responsible for indifference to ethical values and disregard for essential social norms.

Even with its inherent contradictions, democracy is still believed to be the only morally justified form of government. Liberty of thought and expression is threatened in a dictatorship. Besides this, another powerful threat comes from those who have power, political and economic, and who think that general exercise of civil rights will harm their interest and disturb the existing order. People in power encroach upon the liberty of thought and expression directly and violently with an organised police force whenever suggestions for important changes in economic, political and social spheres are put forth. This action is supplemented by organised propaganda against such suggestions and mass media is used as an instrument for it. For overcoming this state of affairs it is necessary that socially and politically conscious people get organised and exercise their weight for the effective translation of constitutional provisions into practice. For this the most effective method, as Gandhiji suggested, is peaceful demonstration of peoples's force. Politics should again be made to rest on strong ethical foundations so that the political aspirations

of the people together with the ideals of democratic society are realised.

Ethical Problems in Relation to Economics

Ethical problems of economic life in the society also need to be discussed. In our complex social life, economic problems stand out in more striking fashion today. The modern cities are the place of commerce and finance. Here it is business which reigns rather than the government. The power wielded by economic institutions is much greater than that exercised by political leaders. The primacy of economic power in our time is mainly due to new discoveries which have given man control over natural resources unknown previously. These have changed the modes of production, conditions of work and the productive capacity of people. But this has also given rise to problems of population movement from rural to urban areas with new tensions and conflicts between economic and political interests. The capitalist economy has given rise to the crucial ethical problem of protecting the lives and health of the workmen. With private property and freedom of enterprise, capitalism mainly relies upon competition. But as Henry Clay said, "Competition coupled with the defenceless condition of the workers tended to make the worst conditions of employment into the standard of conditions. The abandonment of sanitary conditions, hours of work, speed of work, exposure to risk of accident from machinery," have increased human sufferings. The only motive is profit in total disregard of public interest. Profit is increased by restricting the supply of essential goods together with a decline in production of good quality. The motive of profit also involves waste of natural resources such as indiscriminate cutting of forests. Capitalism has given rise to the problem of equal distribution of wealth since the small minority of capitalists is extremely rich and the large majority of workers is extremely poor. This discrimination is a denial of justice. The ethical problem is that of minimising the bad effects of capitalism and introducing better conditions for the workers.

In a social system based on moral principles there cannot be any scope for economic exploitation nor can there be unequal distribution of national wealth. For this Gandhiji suggested that owners of big industries should consider themselves as trustees of national wealth. He also laid emphasis on production based on small village based cottage industries so that most of the working force is employed outside the big industries. But in a socialist society based on

Marxist principles the system of private ownership of industries is abolished. The state cannot have the profit motive at the cost of workers. Many of our ethical problems are due to economic factors. Therefore, economic life of society has to be purified of all the evils such as poverty, unemployment, profiteering, exploitation of poor by the rich and economic inequality.

5

WESTERN ETHICS

The Problem of Moral Standard

The history of Western ethics is a continuous reflective search for an adequate and acceptable moral standard in respect of the actions performed by men individually and in relation to each other. There would bave been no occasion for such a search if men did not find themselves in situations of genuine doubt concerning their conduct. This doubt is sometimes due to ignorance and at other times it is due to questioning the meaning and applicability of a given moral standard. In such a situation one is not able to make a choice. There are occasions when active and genuine doubt arises with respect to our largely unexamined behavioural patterns. The moral training that an individual undergoes from earliest childhood is nothing but a process of habituation in the conventions of the social group, such moral training is certainly not sufficient to guide an intelligent and fully grown-up person in different situations of life when he is to decide between alternative actions. The standards borrowed from customs or derived from conventions are hardly applicable to novel situations. Placed in a society which is not homogeneous, this problem becomes all the more serious when individual actions not only influence a particular social group but the entire society and nation.

To partially overcome this difficulty, one may derive the standard of action from common sense or conventional ethics. But such standards are often vague and hardly help. Sometime one feels that any attempt to reach some settled and reasonable view about what is right or wrong, good or bad is doomed to failure. According to W.T. Stace, this is mainly due to the fact that standards change from place to place and also from society to society. We should not try to find an absolute moral standard. There is no doubt that in all ages the conservatives and old-fashioned people have held the view that the moral law must be the same for all men, and in spite of differences, there must be a single moral standard for all human beings. But men with progressive thinking believe in ethical relativity and dispute the

assertion that there can be a single moral standard equally applicable to all men at all times. There cannot be a single universal objective standard. All moral standards are subjective. People's subjective feelings about morality are the only standard. The distinction between what is actually right and what is thought right is rejected by the ethical relativist, what is moral is identified with what is thought moral. Morality is more a matter of feelings and emotions than of reason and, therefore, relativity of moral standards is an empirical reality.

This, however, has not brought us to any valid conclusion about moral valuation nor a standard of good and right. For a fairly large part of the human history and in all societies of the world, there existed master-morality and slave-morality. Thus, a section of nobility would believe that it has the right to determine and create values. Most of the people therefore, would follow what was determined good for them. With political awakening and the rise of democratic and socialistic thinking, such a distinction has lost its meaning. But men still need some positive and explicit scheme of values to give a direction to life and to provide guidance in the solution of moral perplexities. It is with this problem that most of the traditional moral thinkers have been concerned. The discussion on this issue, as it occurs in the history of Western ethics, may be taken in three main streams of thought.

One major form of ethical thought lays more emphasis on the ideals, goals and ends of life. Thus, the question 'What is the good?' is directly related to 'What should be our aim in life?' The answer given is that the pursuit of a good life is to be identified with the achievement of happiness. This view is clearly humanistic and has a this-worldly outlook. The second major type of ethical thought gives more importance to the doing of what is right and the performance of one's duty. Thus, the chief problem is 'how ought we to act?' Here it is said that the guiding principle should be one's own reason and the sole motive of action should be duty. Finally, there is a third stream of thought which emphasises the essential spiritual nature of man as the sole deciding factor of human destiny. We shall now discuss these views in detail.

Standard as Determined by Happiness

The earliest view on happiness as the standard of moral judgements was expressed by Aristotle in his book *Nicomachean Ethics*. According to him, all the major areas of human experience and activity are

linked with the supreme good, i.e., happiness as means and end. Aristotle's ethics expresses rational humanism in which it is desired that a wiseman must concern himself with those choices of a social or political nature which will effect his personal welfare and satisfaction. Aristotle clearly states in Book I of his *Nicomachean Ethics*[1] "the good is that at which all things aim". "Men aim at happiness. Happiness is the end which we choose for its own sake and never for the sake of some other thing. It is the end to which all our conscious arts are directed."[2] In Chapter 8 of Book I Aristotle again says that virtuous actions are not only good and noble but also a source of pleasure in themselves. Thus, "happiness is the best, the noblest, the most delightful thing in the world."[3] Therefore, moral goodness is a quality disposing us to act in best way when we are dealing with pleasures and pains. In the Book X Aristotle says "Pleasure accompanies and perfects the healthy exercise of our activities dircted to good ends." He suggests that happiness is the end to be sought in human life.

The most powerful support to this view came from Epicurus and his school. Epicureanism is rightly classified as a form of hedonism as it identities the major criterion of goodness in action with pleasure. But it would be wrong to identify Epicurean philosophy with the view that the end of life is "to eat, drink and be merry". Epicurus and his followers were not concerned with the immediate and impulsive gratification of purely sensual desires. This type of crude hedonism should be attributed to Aristippus who lived between 435 and 356 B.C. Unlike Aristippus, Epicurus looked for a more refined mode of existence though he said that the good life is the pleasant life. He saw the chief good of life in tranquillity and that which involved freedom from anxiety in the mind and pain in the body. The most enduring pleasure is realised in the disciplined satisfaction of desires. In one of his letters Epicurus wrote, "When we maintain that pleasure is the end, we do not mean the pleasures of profligates and those that consist in sensuality, as is supposed by some who are either ignorant or disagree with us or do not understand, but freedom from pain in the body and from trouble in the mind. For it is not continuous drinking or revellings nor satisfaction of lusts . . . which produce a pleasant life but

1. *Nicomachean Ethics* — Aristotle Book I chapter 5, 7, 13— Tr. by J.A.K. Thomson; George Allen and Unwin, London 1953.
2. ibid.
3. ibid.

sober reasoning." Thus, the ideal of life suggested by the Epicureans is not only realistic but appeals to reason.

The modern presentation of the view that happiness constitutes the standard of morality and all our action was articulated in the moral philosophy of Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill from the middle of eighteenth to the middle of nineteenth century. This view consisted of broader humanitarian outlook in moral and it came to be known as utilitarianism. As distinct from Aristippus, Aristotle and the Epicureans, the utilitarian moralists emphatically declared that the experience of pleasure alone could be considered as intrinsically good and desirable for its own sake. The general aim of life is maximisation of pleasure—the achievement of greatest amount of happiness. This pleasure was equated with utility. Secondly, the utilitarians asserted that the moral quality of an action must be judged by its consequences—production of happiness for the greatest number. Finally, the utilitarians developed a moral theory which was universalistic in intent. Thus, they stood for an essentially democratic moral theory. All men are entitled to the good life which means pleasurable life without any descrimination. For judging the moral quality of actions, utilitarians looked at their consequences. Consequently, that action was to be preferred and rated morally good if it promised the greatest happiness for the individual or the greatest happiness for the greatest number. There are occasions when an action is good for the individual but not good for society. There can be a conflict between individual and social good. Therefore, it is asserted that the morally good action produces the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people.

In his book *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* Bentham considered the principle of utility as the sole determining factor of morality and all our actions. According to him utility means that property in an object which tends to produce benefit, advantage, pleasure, goodness and happiness. An action possesses utility if it promotes happiness and minimises the chances of pain. In specifying utility to the moral criterion of action, Bentham adopted a purely quantitative approach. He held that pleasures differ in quantity and suggested a hedonistic calculus to measure the quantity of pleasure and pain for determining the moral quality of a particular action. According to this calculus, pleasure is measured in terms of intensity, duration, certainty or uncertainty, closeness, fecundity, purity and extent. However, these criteria of quantifying pleasure are difficult to

apply in practice. For example, it is impossible to compare the intensity of pleasure in listening to classical music with that of reading a book or taking a walk. Besides this, Bentham did not support the utilitarian standard faithfully as he could not give a convincing motive for preferring the utilitarian ideal over the egoistic tendency of seeking one's own pleasure. Lastly, the biggest shortcoming of Bentham's theory is that he distinguished between pleasures only in terms of quantity, not in terms of quality, i.e. he did not distinguish between higher and lower kinds of pleasures. His famous disciple J.S. Mill tried to improve upon him through more consistent arguments.

Mill said, "Pleasure and freedom from pain are the only things desirable as ends, and that all desirable things are desirable either for the pleasure inherent in themselves, or as means to the promotion of pleasure." But in stating this theory, Mill carefully distinguished between higher and lower pleasures. According to Mill, there would hardly be a "human creature who would consent to be changed into any of lower animals for a promise of the fullest allowance of a beast's pleasure; no intelligent human being would consent to be a fool... no person of feeling and conscience would be selfish and base, even though they should be persuaded that the fool is better satisfied with his lot than they are with theirs."[1] Thus, man being rational and social, prefers higher pleasure to lower pleasures. In his assertion that some pleasures are higher and preferable, Mill as an empiricist appealed to the common experience of mankind and remarked that, "It is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied."[2]

In accepting the principle of utility or happiness as the directive rule of human conduct, Mill laid down a condition "that standard is not the agent's own greatest happiness, but the greatest amount of happiness altogether."[3] This led him to his famous assertion that "utilitarianism could only attain its end by the general cultivation of nobleness of character whereby one would desire the greatest happiness of the greatest number of people."[4] Happiness which forms the utilitarian standard of what is right in conduct is not the agent's own happiness, but the general happiness of all concerned.

1. *ibid.*
2. *ibid.*
3. *ibid.*
4. *ibid.*

In bringing this section to a close, it may be said that of the various philosophies developed since the turn of the century, one of the best examples of a naturalistic and humanistic approach to ethics was that of John Dewey who identified the good life with the pursuit of happiness. This view was based mainly on the belief that any practical and realist moral philosophy must obtain its validation through reference to empirically testable consequences as is the case with theories of science. According to Dewey, "The problem of restoring integration and cooperation between man's beliefs about the world in which he lives and his beliefs about values and purposes that should direct his conduct is the deepest problem of modern life. It is the problem of any philosophy that is not isolated from life."[1] Such a cooperation is possible if moral good is made natural, humane, in touch with the natural goods of life. The utilitarian moral theory needs to be appreciated in this regard. "Goodness without happiness, virtue without satisfaction, ends without conscious enjoyment—these things are as intolerable practically as they are self-contradictory in conception".[2] Thus, being a pragmatist Dewey supported hedonistic and utilitarian standards of morality. But according to him happiness is not a fixed attainment, a bare possession but an active process which involves moving forward and overcoming difficulties.

To conclude this section, we can say that the ethical philosophies which we have considered adopt a common view of life and human happiness. The basic goal of moral life for an individual is to find some way so that he can attain the greatest possible happiness for himself and others. One must use inherited capacities and acquired interests to make the best of this life as the moral ideal. A contrary view of life would not only be against the natural inclination of man but also unrealistic and unpractical.

Moral Sandard as Determined by Duty

The moral philosophies subscribing to this view emphasise a different concept of morality. According to them the most crucial fact of life is not the satisfaction of desires but the obedience of rules. The goal of life is not to be judged in terms of how much or what kind of satisfaction the individual realises, but in the extent to which his conduct fulfils the demands of the society to which he belongs. The chief good of life, the moral good consists in doing what is right. Rules of

1 Dewey, John: *Reconstruction of Philosophy:* Beacon Press, London, 1982.
2 *ibid.*

morality define what is right. Moral conduct has to move within the limits set by 'ought' and 'ought not' as determined by the competent moral authority.

What can be the possible moral authority whose rules would guide the life and conduct of a man interested in performing the right action? To this question there are different opinions. Some believe that the ultimate source of moral authority is religious in character — God is the author of rules as to what is right for man. There are others who consider the objective order of rational norms as disclosed to human reason to be the criterion in determining right conduct. We shall briefly discuss these views.

As an advance over primitive societies where customs dominated the patterns of behaviour, an effort was made to ground moral codes in a superhuman and eternal source. In declaring God as the supreme moral authority, all possible opposition to religion was eliminated and people were made to conform to authority. This contributed to the evolution of a highly spiritualised and universalised religion of love and mercy. God is treated as the creator of all things and the legislator for all mankind. This view is contrary to Socratic ethics according to which moral failure is always due to ignorance of what is the good life rather than disobedience of God's commandments. But the principles of religious ethics are extremely complex and have undergone many changes in their historical development. One such development was the Stoic philosophy which treated Nature and God as one. This view served the needs of those who turned to philosophy and religion for consolation. Nature reflects a rational order which can be discoverd by reason.

The approach to ethics in terms of an emphasis on duty was rigorously expressed by the German philosopher Immanuel Kant. In his two works *The Fundamental Principles of Metaphysics of Morals* and *The Critique of Practical Reason* Kant provides a practical moral guide for mankind, i.e., obey the dictates of your reason and always act for the sake of duty. To this Kant attaches an important condition: What is right must be capable of universal agreement by rational minds. Just as there cannot be one truth for me another for you, so in morals, there cannot be one set of standards for me and another for you. Therefore, in the search of an ethical standard Kant does not accept subjective and relative norms of evaluation. Rather he advocates man's own capacity for autonomous, self-legislating guidance of conduct by the use of universally shared rational faculties. A

genuine rule of conduct that would determine what is right must be capable of universalisation. Thus, to determine how a man ought to act in any particular situation is to ask how any rational being ought to act in similar circumstances. This form of morality is expressed in the single categorical imperative which Kant formulates "Act only on that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law." Kant's ethical pricnciple of categorical imperative is treated separately in greater detail.

Kant's rigorous doctrine of duty for the sake of duty under obligation of following the universal law of reason by virtue of being rational made a tremendous impact on the moral philosophy of his time and afterwards. However, it would not be out of place to mention the recent modifications made to it. For the leading American idealist philosopher Josiah Royce, the real mark of good life is devotion to some cause which is noble and has wider social implications. When human energies are directed towards a carefully chosen ideal the individual is able to give purpose and direction to his life. Such a goal may be search of truth, service of mankind, or doing of things that would help in general welfare. Thus, morality demands loyalty not to the law of reason directly but to those causes which can contribute to the overall harmonious life of the great community of mankind as a whole. In the words of Royce, "Your true cause is the spiritual unity of all the world of reasonable beings."* This supports Kant's formula for the categorical imperative but lifts it from the level of a purely logical criterion into a rule for judging the rightness and goodness of actions in terms of their ultimate social worth.

Another contemporary philosopher Sir W.D. Ross abandons the Kantian approach that moral law is sanctioned by the categorical imperative. According to Kant the moral law defining where one's duty lies must be universal and necessary. To replace such an absolutistic conception of duty, Ross introduces the idea of *prima facie* duties — a duty which holds in absence of a stronger obligation. These are real duties which admit the possibility of exceptional conditions. For example it is obligatory to speak the truth but in an exceptional condition, one may avoid speaking the truth or may even speak a lie for a more overriding obligation to save a life. If there is a situation in which one *prima facie* duty clashes with another *prima facie* duty, it is not necessary to look for a general rule but to act as it

* Josiah Royce: *The Sources of Religious Thought*, Lecture V, 1972.

appears to be desirable. An act is right not because it produces good results different from itself. Rather it is right because it is itself the production of a certain state of affairs. An action is right in itself even if it does promote the general welfare. We have to recognise the intrinsic rightness of an act. This rightness does not depend on the consequences of the action but on its own nature. What Ross wants to emphasise is that man acts in various situations and, therefore, must act according to the merits of the act as well as the demands of the situation. This is essential to avoid placing man under a highly formalistic principle of morality.

These two sections dealing with different moral philosophies have emphasised that man is a finite creature and his natural instincts need to be transformed through a definite moral approach. The first section covers philosophers who have made the pursuit of happiness as the goal of man, and the second section has concentrated on the importance of devotion to duty as the moral ideal. Thus, either consequences, (production of happiness) determine the moral quality of action or the moral law, the law of reason or the devotion to duty. Both views emphasise that the natural man is to be transformed into a social and moral being. Morality has relevance only because man is finite. The moral philosophers in the third and final category adopt an altogether different approach as they do not start with the same presupposition — the finitude of man.

The Standard as Determined by Man's Spirituality

Here we have to present a new dimension of ethical philosophy whereby the essential spirituality of man becomes the central point of any moral approach. Spirituality or spiritual life does not necessarily mean living for obscure and high ideals or living according to the commandments of religion. In other words, a man can lead a spiritual life even if he does not subscribe to a set of religious beliefs. Spirituality implies liberation from the common worldly life of material pressures and pulls. In this sense we may refer to the ethics of Buddhism and Christianity. Both Lord Buddha and Jesus Christ through their own life and conduct have shown what spirituality can mean as a guiding principle of human conduct.

Buddhist view: Lord Buddha declared that the root cause of human misery and suffering is nothing but a ceaseless craving for things, the thirst for more and more. Real freedom and peace comes when man overcomes this craving for more and more possessions. After *nirvana*,

pleasure-pain, success-failure, love-hate cease to exist. Man becomes filled with a spontaneous desire to do good to all. The Buddha was a practical man who offered his advice as a spiritual physician. He revealed the four noble truths to mankind to overcome human suffering. In making man conscious of suffering and the cause of suffering, the Buddha identified the illness and determined its root. Then he assured that illness could be cured and prescribed the treatment. This was the eightfold path — right view, right aspiration, right speech, right conduct, right means, right endeavour, right mindfulness and right contemplation.

Thus, for a man who is out to pursue the moral path it is suggested that he should avoid extremes in life. Too much attachment with worldly life is as bad as running away from the life of action altogether. The middle path is the most ideal for practical activity, the path whereby one lives without ego and joins the wide life of love and compassion for all.

Christian View: Christian spirituality means striving to become like God and the essence of God is love. Love is relevant to every moral experience. Men are asked to "Love their enemies," to "Forgive, not seven times, but seventy times seven" to resist evil—do good to them that hate you. For a moral man, resistance and resentment are forbidden. The justification for these is purely religious and not in socio-moral terms. We are to forgive since God forgives. There should be no consideration for natural impulses or social consequences. This is a drawback as it can lead to practical difficulties in constructing a socio-moral policy. The ethics of Jesus demands an absolute obedience to the will of God without any consideration to those consequences of moral action which must be the concern of any prudential ethics. For the Christian ethics, anything less than perfect love in human life is destructive of life—the law of love must govern life in totality.

Schopenhauer's View: In his book *The World as Will and Idea* Arthur Schopenhauer has given a different view of spiritual life. It consists of deriving ethical norms from a metaphysical view of reality. For Schopenhauer, it is the Will which is the cause of all our problems in actual life. There is no possibility of happiness so long as man lives at the level of life which is identified with a continuous search for satisfaction of desires. To escape from the grip of Will, he suggests contemplation of beauty and art as well as renunciation — living a life of holiness like the Buddha.

Thus, we see that the essence of moral life is spiritual and man is supposed to rise above his individuality and egoism. In such transcendance, the empirical realities of pleasure and pain, gain or loss, become meaningless. There is only love, compassion and faith in the eternal unity of things. The prophets of various religions through their own life and conduct have shown the practical possibility of such a life founded on spiritualism.

Nature of Ethical Judgement

The problem of nature of ethical judgements is important since it is intimately related with the standard of moral life which we accept. This is because all ethical judgements are meant to determine the moral quality of actions under the accepted moral standard. Ethical judgement is an act of pronouncing a particular action, intention or motive either good or bad in the light of a universally accepted moral standard. Ethical judgement must not be vague expressions of a man's opinion about the action judged.

The term judgement, as it is used by philosophers, covers both the cases of knowledge and belief. A judgement is basically a mental activity whereby one comes to a conclusion about the quality of the action perceived. A definite thought process precedes such a formation of belief. Therefore, a judgement is not necessarily an expression of belief in words, one can arrive at a conclusion in the mind after observing a particular action. In logical terminology, when a judgement is expressed in words, it becomes a proposition. When we are to explain the nature of ethical judgements we must cover both the cases of judgements and propositions as the terms are commonly used by contemporary philosophers. This is because judgement as merely a belief about the moral quality of an action hardly serves any purpose in social life unless it is known and accepted by others. Ethical judgements have a practical function in so far as they urge upon others to abstain from what is evil or wrong.

Ethical judgements are statements of assertion through which we express the state of our mind and induce others to act in a certain way. These judgements always involve two elements — subjective and objective. The subjective element refers to the moral attitude of the person making the judgement, and it consists of the person's psychological and emotional condition, his propensities etc. The objective element refers to the norm or standard on the basis of which the judgement is made. This standard is independent of the person and universal.

Ethical judgements have a necessary cognitive function. Strictly on the basis of our ethical experiences, we can say that there is something objectively good or bad, right or wrong and this is prior to our attitude about the thing or act which is judged. If this is not accepted, then in judging we express simply our personal taste or preference. If the cognitive element is altogether removed from ethical judgements, then there would be hardly any justification for saying that Hitler acted badly or needless infliction of pain on others is wrong. An ethical judgement has to be a statement which can be supported by sufficient rational grounds, otherwise it would be merely an expression of personal opinion which may differ from person to person. On the other hand, reasoning should make people pronounce ethical judgements as only human beings are capableof distinguishing moral quality over and above their individual likes or dislikes. Ethical judgements must be rational and objective. When it is said violence is bad, it is bad objectively and rationally. Here personal feelings or attitudes are hardly of any significance.

We are now faced with a very important problem. This problem is concerned with ethical beliefs in relation to ethical judgements. People differ enormously in their ethical beliefs and hence in their ethical judgements. But judgements based on differences of ethical beliefs should not be carried too far. There was once a belief about an empirical fact that eclipse occurs due to operation of a demon. Can we consider a judgement based on this belief as valid? Similarly, differences in ethical judgements cannot mean that there are no real ethical judgements at all. As a matter of fact, the majority of ethical differences are due to differences of beliefs as to matters of fact. This is mainly because of differences in social conditions and psychological orientation of people. Besides this, even in admitting differences of opinion on ethical questions, it is not wrong to say that our ethical judgements claim objective truth and such claim is often rationally justified. People often suppress their reason about the objectivity of judgement just as a matter of convenience or out of personal disinclination to recognise that an act is good and must be pursued. For example, a son may neglect to take proper care of his aged parents while knowing very well that it is his duty to look after them as they have no other support. Thus, there is a difference about the duty being actually performed, but there can be no difference in the judgement that the duty should be performed. Differences on the matter of duty may be there, but the act of duty does not lose objective value.

In cases of dispute, Kant's ethical criteria of universality can be of great help. An act is right if it can be universalised or has universal approval. When all human beings act and judge as rational beings, there can be no differences.

To conclude our discussion on the nature of ethical judgement, it may be said that an ethical judgement must be an objective statement without involving subjective factors such as feelings and emotions. In real ethical judgements, personal opinion or taste or even attitude must not be given weight over the objective worth of an action. Besides this, all ethical judgements must be rationally justifiable, otherwise these would express individual moods and preferences. Objectivity and rationality are closely related factors. Ethical judgements are judgements of value and not judgements of facts since there is element of 'should' or 'ought' involved.

Ethics and Emotivism

The term emotivism in ethics refers to a distinct point of view about ethical judgements held by the logical positivists of contemporary western philosophy. Prof. A.J. Ayer in his famous book, *Language, truth and logic,* while redefining the role and purpose of philosophy, touched upon ethics and ethical judgements. His point of view is known as the emotive theory of ethics.

The logical positivists hold that the history of ethics has been vainly in search of knowledge of good and bad, right and wrong. All cognitive statements deal with facts while ethical statements primarily involve an emotion. All cognitively meaningful statements, according to Ayer, are in nature either analytic or synthetic. Analytic statements are non-empirical and include mathematical and logical propositions. Synthetic statements are empirical and require reference to the facts of actual experience to establish their truth. However, ethical statements such as "violence against innocent people is always bad", and "helping to save a drowning man is a commendable act", cannot be called analytic or synthetic. There is no point of attributing truth or falsity to such statements. They only illustrate an emotive use of language—expression of one's feeling of disapproval and approval.

According to this theory, ethical judgements are statements expressing attitudes — merely expressive of certain feeling, of approval or disapproval. Since these are not statements of facts, we cannot attribute truth or falsity to them. But at the same time, Ayer makes it clear that his view should not be misunderstood to mean that there is nothing like good or bad and man can do anything he likes. In calling

an act good we merely express our moral attitude. In the words of Ayer, "A moral philosopher even in my sense of the term will have his moral standards and he will sometimes make moral judgements, but these moral judgements cannot be a logical consequence of his philosophy."[1]

What A.J. Ayer and other logical positivists want to emphasise is that an ethical judgement is not purely a theoretical or intellectual matter. It is more practical with the purpose of persuading others to do what is good. Ethical judgement, therefore, is the expression of emotional and practical attitude. To approve something is not just to assert a proposition, to make an intellectual judgement about it, but to adopt a positive emotional attitude favouring it, to set ourselves to support it or anything like it. The function of language is not merely to make assertion but also to express emotional attitudes and this is true in the case of ethical judgements. All ethical judgements are a class by themselves and should not be equated with propositions expressing facts. When we make a statement justifying or condemning an act, the reasons for such a statement are reasons only in the sense that they determine our attitude. In other words, a moral judgement is the expression of the attitude which the reasons given for it are calculated to evoke. Our moral attitude consists of a certain pattern of behaviour and the expression of a moral judgement is an element in that pattern. The moral judgement expresses the attitude in the sense that it contributes to defining it.

Prof. Charles L. Stevenson in his essay "The Nature of Ethical Disagreement" contributes in explaining the positivists point of view about ethical statements. According to him, terms such as good, wrong, ought etc. are habitually used to deal with disagreement in attitude. Due to their frequent use in emotional conditions, they have acquired a strong emotive meaning. This emotive meaning may serve in initiating a change in moral attitudes. Thus, those who refuse to identify ethical statements with scientific ones hold that such statements tend to change attitudes rather than describe them. "The distinguishing features of an ethical judgement can be preserved by a recognition of emotive meaning and disagreement in attitude, rather than by some non-natural quality."[2] In all cases of ethical judgements, one merely expresses his emotional attitude towards the act judged which

1 A.J. Ayer: *Language, Truth and Logic* Chap VI Victor Gollancz Ltd. London 1946
2 C.L. Stevenson: *The Nature of Ethical Disagreement*

may differ with others on the basis of different ethical beliefs but such differences of beliefs cannot be given too much importance. It is because in the expression of an attitude of approval or disapproval, there is an implied desire that others should also have the same attitude. An important point to note is that valuation in its emotive sense is not a description of the quality of an act. The moral problem is "What am I to do? What attitude am I to take?" Moral judgements are directive in this sense.

Determinism and Freedom

The problem of free will, that is, whether the human will is free to act and not to act, or whether it is determined, is among the oldest of moral questions. While moralists and guardians of law pleaded in favour of free will, the behavioural scientists held that free will is impossible due to compelling scientific reasons. The interest in the problem is motivated by the fact that belief in free will is inconsistent with scientific principles and denial of free will jeopardises morality and jurisprudence. Thus there are clearly two schools of thought, one holding that all our actions are determimed and the other that the human will is free in making choices between alternative actions, otherwise the concept of moral responsibility would be meaningless.

On the basis of our ordinary experience, we know that freedom means the freedom of doing and not doing an act. But the problem arises when it is uncritically accepted that man has the power of free choice. The determinists do not accept the concept of free choice. There have been two broad contexts within which the denial of free will has been viewed. These are the theological and scientific contexts. Those who helieve in God as the ultimate source of all that happens in the world cannot accept man as the master of his own destiny. Man cannot be endowed with the power to choose between good and evil when we accept God as the sole determining force. Thus, free will is inconsistent with basic religious belief.

With the emergence of science in the modern age as the chief source of knowledge about nature, the problem of free will was viewed from a different angle. Science rests on the belief that there is no chance occurrence in nature and everything is subject to causal laws. Whatever happens is explained in terms of sequence of events, that is, antecedents and consequents. An event has a cause and an effect, cause is the antecedent and effect is the consequence. This not only controls all happenings in nature but also human behaviour. Man

is a part of nature and cannot transcend causal laws. Precisely which laws govern human behaviour is still a matter of investigation by psychology and sociology. But the view that all natural phenomena including all human actions are subject to causal laws is a deterministic point of view and goes against free will. Since science believes in determinism, a belief in free will is unscientific. Thus the attack on free will came both from traditional theology and modern science.

Those who advocate the view that all our actions are already determined by factors and causes beyond our control consider the concept of free will as illusory and deceptive. Everything is determined by antecedent events and human action cannot be an exception to this principle. To think that at a particular moment one can act in several alternative ways is a mistaken notion. Antecedent events fully determine action and there is no choice. There is something called compulsion of circumstances and causes. No one has any control on the causes of his actions. How can a man control his actions when he cannot control the causes of his actions? A cause necessitates an action and no freedom of choice is left. A cause is cause because it can produce an effect. The concept of free will is incompatible with the view that every action has a cause. No conduct is ever uncaused and, hence, ever free. The determinist would not accept the position that action is performed without any cause or compulsive condition. When we think that a man has chosen between various alternatives out of free will, we ignore that in choosing a particular alternative there might be reasons eliminating the possibility of acting in a contrary manner.

However, the concept of free will is indispensable in ethics. Morality is impossible unless voluntary actions are presumed to be an exception to the principle that everything is preceded by a cause. For this reason Kant postulated free will as a necessary condition for morality. From the theological point of view, if man has no power to choose between right and wrong, the concept of sin cannot be applied to his conduct. Besides this, repentence for an act would be meaningful only if freedom is a reality. The feeling of repentence is the proof that the deed could be avoided. The concepts of reward and punishment also presuppose the freedom of will. Doubts about freedom are raised when the problem is taken from the ordinary level of human experience to a higher intellectual level and complicated with scientific principles and psychological compulsions. What we know in our day-to-day experience is that we do act voluntarily and we do

make choice between different actions. The conception of volition implies that there is a great part of human actions where free choice is made.

The problem of moral freedom is inseparably associated with the ideas of duty, obligation, law, guilt and remorse, praise and blame etc. All these are central to any ethical thinking. Man is free because in his voluntary actions, he is self-determined, his desires direct his conduct not in isolation, but taken up into the unity of the self as a whole. Kant says only 'goodwill' is free. Goodwill is nothing but the rational attitude of doing or not doing an act. Volition implies that man in the performance of his conduct is solely guided by his own reason and not determined by any other factor.

The problem of free will is felt to be an urgent problem by an ordinary educated man because it is closely connected with the concept of moral responsibility. We regard a man morally responsible for an act since he is presumed to be free in doing that act. Free will in some sense is a precondition of moral responsibility. Putting it in another form, what makes an act a morally responsible act? There are two fundamental conditions: the first condition is that the act must be self-caused or self-determined. The person who acts must not merely be a cause but the sole cause for his act to hold moral responsibility. An act is a free act in the sense required for moral responsibility if the doer of the act himself is the sole cause. Closely connected with this condition is another condition that while exerting his own determination, he should be able to act in alternative ways. Thus, mere self-determination is not enough to ensure moral responsibility, one should also be able to make choice without any external determining factor. Psychologists may argue that a man is what he is made by his heredity and environment. These two factors determine his nature and conduct. To this we say that inherited nature and environmental circumstance do play their part, but not as factors external to the self.

In fact the problem of free will and its close relation with moral responsibility need not be complicated with the use of unnecessary logical arguments from science and theology. We do believe that there is law of causation working in nature and everything is subject to this law. But it does not go against free will as we say that the will is not uncaused but self-caused. Thus, the concept of free will is not contrary to scientific belief. As for theology, it shares with morality certain conception which become inapplicable to human conduct if

the existence of free will is denied. The religious conceptions of sin, atonement, repentence, reward become meaningless if freedom of choice between good and bad, right and wrong is taken away from man. In our actual experience, very often we feel that we are acting freely and we can act otherwise also. If this is not true and freedom is illusory, then there should be a very convincing argument to prove it. Freedom is a matter of immediate awareness. If really there is no freedom of doing or not doing, then there is no moral responsibility of any of our acts. One can easily imagine the consequences of such a moral philosophy in our social life and human relationship. Belief in freedom of will is not only a theoretical reality but also a practical necessity in the interest of morality.

An ethical judgement is passed on only voluntary actions since they are self-caused. It is only in the case of voluntary actions that good and bad make any sense. Since such actions are self-determinated, we hold the doer morally responsible. If a man is overpowered and compelled to fire a gun which causes death, he should not be held guilty of murder. He did not act voluntarily, as he could not, had he so wished, have acted otherwise in the circumstances. On the other hand, if the same man kills someone with the hope of grabbing his property, the action is still caused—greed of wealth. Action in this case is voluntary and the man is guilty of murder. Comparing the two cases, we clearly see that in the first case the cause is external to the killer, while in the second case it is the killer's own decision. Where there is volition there is free will, and where there is free will there is moral responsibility.

We may put the problem of free will in relation to determinism and compulsion for better clarity. A man is free when his conduct is under his own control, he acts under compulsion when someone controls his conduct. When conduct is under one's own control, it is determined by ones desires, motives and intentions. Hence, the fear of the moralists that determination of the will is incompatible with its freedom is not correct. We have only to see whether the will is determined by external cause or self-determined. Moral responsibility for an act implies freedom and freedom implies self-determination.

Ethical Intuitionism and Kant's Categorical Imperative

The most important problem in ethics is concerned with determining the standard of moral judgements. Since ethics deals with human conduct and its evaluation we must have an objectively and

universally acceptable standard for such evaluation. Unfortunately, the history of ethics does not present a universally acceptable solution to the problem. In other words, moral philosophers do not agree on the issue of the standard of moral judgements. It is not possible to deal with all the various views regarding this topic. However, we shall discuss the views of the intuitionists and German philosopher Kant in this part and the utilitarian view in the next part of this chapter. This discussion will cover the most important respresentatives of moral thinkers who devoted their attention in solution of the problem of standard.

Intuitionism in ethics is a point of view which holds that the real standard of moral judgement must come from within the man judging an act to be right or wrong. All actions have their own intrinsic values and therefore, when we judge an act there should be no reference to external factors or consequences. The moral philosophers who support this view also believe that men are capable of judging an act immediately and intuitively due to the moral sense inherent in them. This moral sense can examine the quality of any action before making an ethical judgement. We all have the power to perceive the intrinsic worth of actions by merely looking at them. The term intuition is drawn from the Latin word *intueri* wich means *to look at*. We can perceive the moral quality by simply looking at the action without any reference to the ends (actual or prospective) which that action is meant to produce. Our judgements on actions are intuitve and immediate. For example, speaking the truth is good because it is right in its own nature and therefore, everyobdy must speak the truth as a duty.

The development of intuitionism in ethics was reaction against the famous British philosopher Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) and his views. Hobbes was a materialist and an egoist. He considered human nature as essentially materialistic, deterministic and egoistic. For him morality was nothing but a device used by man for securing the maximum degree of self-preservation. The most remarkable thing about Hobbes is that he was very honest in his thinking and developed his materialistic point of view with the utmost clarity. Applying his materialism in the field of morality, Hobbes declared that man was selfish by nature. Morality and moral concepts were relative to persons and their appetites or desires. There is no absolute moral value. The facts of experience reveal that man works for his own self-interests. Even in the activities which appear to be of a benevolent nature, there is always some hidden self-interest. To say that a man

will sacrifice his interests for the sake of others is contrary to the actual facts of life and the essential nature of man.

The intuitionists took upon themselves the responsibility of opposing the view of Hobbes and other materialist thinkers. Their attack is directed at two points: Firstly the account of human nature given by Hobbes is rejected. It is not correct to say that man is exclusively selfish. The facts about human nature reveal that benevolence and the sense of duty are as important in human nature as the desire for self-preservation. Secondly the intuitionists opposed Hobbes' attempt to reduce morality to non-moral factors. Hobbes had reduced moral norms and values to such non-moral factors as self-preservation and appetites. Intuitionists considered such a reduction as illogical.

In the words of Professor W.D. Hudson, "Ethical intuitionism is the view that normal human beings have an immediate awareness of moral values." Intuitionism asserts that man by nature is good. His actions are motivated by self-love as well as benevolence. All intuitionists start with the presumption that man by nature is moral. He is equipped with a moral sense which enables him to distinguish between right and wrong, good and bad. This point of wiew was supported by some British philosophers of 17th and 18th centuries. The most prominent among them are Anthony Ashley Cooper, third Earl of Shaftesbury (1671-1713), Francis Hutcheson (1694-1746), Ralph Cudworth (1617-88), Samuel Clarke (1675-1729), John Balguy (1686-1748), Richard Price (1723-91) and Joseph Butler (1692-1752). Holding the basic thesis of intuitionism, these thinkers advance their views in slightly different ways. Those belonging to the moral sense school conceived moral awareness as a form of sense perception. Some of them who claimed to be rationalists considered reason or understanding as the basis of moral awareness. According to them, reason helps man in making distinctions between right and wrong.

The intuitionists assert that any objective investigation of human nature will reveal that man can pass immediate judgements on actions. This is due to the moral faculty in all man. There are three functions attributed to this faculty such as perception of moral properties, approval or disapproval of conduct and lastly, motivation or excitement to action. The moral sense in man is like any other sense. Our moral perceptions are as immediate as our perception of colour or shape. Shaftesbury considered the moral sense in man as natural. Evidence of this is found when we consult our own self by means of introspection. Whoever consults his self will find a ready answer to

his moral doubts and questions. There is no need of deliberation. All ethical intuitionists subscribe to the view that there are moral truths known to us by intuition. The judgements based on intuition do not need to be supported by any other argument. When it comes to moral values, men can pass judgements without any effort because of the moral sense.

The rational intuitionists consider rightness or wrongness, goodness or badness of an action as intrinsic to the action itself. Elaborating their point of view, Moore asserts that we know by intuition the ends which are good. Explaining the moral thinking in man, H.A. Prichard said, "This apprehension is immediate in precisely the sense in which a mathematical apprehension is immediate."* In any situation we can know by intuition what could be right, but in this a certain amount of reasoning may be necessary in order to clear the ground for the operation of intuition. Rational intuitionists consider reason in man as the moral faculty. For them our moral judgements are an aspect of the understanding to perceive agreement or disagreement between our ideas. Intuition is the power of immediate perception which gives rise to new ideas. Explaining the rationalist point of view, Prof. W.D. Hudson says, "Reason or understanding which discovers the nature of things, discerns the virtue of benevolence. So, since man is rational being, this virtue is in accordance both with the nature of things and with the nature of man." But it is not difficult to understand that man is the only animal who has the power of judging, making distinction between proper and improper actions. He is the only animal who can think. Devoid of reasoning, man will become like other animlas. Therefore, the moral sense in man follows his rationality. It is difficult to consider the moral sense as different from the rational sense. An infant whose reasoning has yet to manifest itself cannot distinguish between right and wrong. The main difference between the moral sense school and the rational intuitionists is that the former consider moral ideas as derived from the natural moral sense in man, while the latter think that such ideas are derived from our reason.

At this place it is quite appropriate to mention Joseph Butler whose ideas are more appealing to common sense. Influenced by both the moral sense school and the rationalists, Butler made an attempt to effect a compromise between the two through his own account of the moral faculty. For him the moral faculty is "Our moral understanding

* H.A. Prichard: 'Does Moral Philosophy Rest on a Mistake?' *Mind*, 1912.

and moral sense." Existence of terms like right and good presuppose that there is moral faculty. It can be called conscience, moral reason or moral sense.

Approaching the problem as a moral psychologist, Butler makes an interesting analysis of human nature. For him man is a complex constitution of various elements or principles. Man by nature is good and, therefore, none of these elements are evil. But there is a certain proportion and certain relation of subordination between the various elements. Wrong actions are the result of excessive or inappropriate functioning of some element of human nature. The four elements which Butler mentions are : element constituted of instincts and impulses; element of self-love or selfishness; element of benevolence; and element of conscience. In ideal human nature, instincts and impulses must remain subordinate to self-love and benevolence and these general principles in turn duly subordinated to the supreme principle of conscience. Conscience is the moral faculty in all men and helps in passing objective and impartial judgements on actions. It is an intuitive faculty which guides us in all our moral actions and judgements. Conscience reflects on actions from the point of view of their intrinsic moral quality.

Explaining the nature of conscience as an intuitive moral faculty in all human beings, Butler said, "There is a superior principle of reflection or conscience in every man which distinguishes between the internal principles of his heart, as well as his external actions, which passes judgement upon himself and them; pronounces determinately some actions to be in themselves just, right, good others to be evil, wrong, unjust, which without being consulted, without being advised with, *magisterially* exerts itself, and approves or condemns him, the doer of them accordingly." Conscience, according to Butler, is a principle of reflection by means of which we are able to act and form intentions and motives. Conscience has the power of making destinctions between right and wrong since it can perceive the moral quality of actions. It exercises the position of supreme moral authority. It is self-authenticating that is, it does not require any other power or authority to guide it or to establish it's validity. Conscience is an ever-present, ever-guiding moral faculty in men in all situations of life. We are obliged to obey this faculty due to our own basic nature.

An intuition of conscience is self-caused and it is perception of the moral fitness of actions. Conscience performs two functions: it reflects on moral worth of actions and it supplies us with moral law.

Besides actions conscience also reflects on character, intentions and motives with regard to their goodness or badness. Secondly, conscience performs the function of an authority while it passes moral commands. This is the authoritative aspect of conscience. Butler was of the view that we could seek guidance from this faculty whenever there is difficulty in making judgements. This is the ultimate moral standard. Butler agreed with the other intuitionists as far as the presence of the natural moral sense is concerned. According to him, this moral sense is none other than conscience which guides our moral choices, actions and judgements.

Immanuel Kant, who lived from 1724 to 1804, was among the greatest moral philosophers in the history of philosophy. Born in the small town of Konigsberg in Germany, he spent all his life in that quiet place without ever moving out. His contributions to philosophy in the fields of logic, epistemology and ethics are of crucial importance. His *Critique* of *Practical Reason* and *Metaphysics of Morals* are unique contributions to ethics. Unlike many other philosophers he attached equal importance to man as a knower and as a doer. Man performs the role of a moral agent in society, hence, he must respect and obey the moral law. As Cassirer remarks, "Kant looks for constancy not in what man is, but in what he should be."*

The ethical philosophy of Kant is contained in his two important works : *Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysics of Morals*, and the *Critique of Practical Reason*. He was intuitionist in the sense that he believed in the intrinsic value of actions. He used the term good and right to indicate goodness in itself and not for a purpose or a desired end. Goodness does not depend upon the consequences of actions. Thus, there is a fundamental difference between Kant and the utilitarians like Bentham and J.S. Mill. For the utilitarians our actions are to be judged by the net results they produce in terms of pleasure and pain. Actions have no value of their own. But for Kant an action loses it moral value if it is to be determined by considerations other than it's own intrinsic worth.

Man has a dual nature. He is a product of Nature governed by the natural laws of cause and effect like other physical objects. His senses and intellect belong to the world of detenninism. But there is another aspect which consists of the faculty of will. It represents rational faculty and the rational attitude of doing things. Before taking up the

* E. Cassirer: ***Rousseau, Kant, Goethe,*** Princeton 1945.

moral law, the categorical imperative for explanation, Kant elaborated the concept of will and its special status. Man is determined to the extent that he acts on the basis of his senses and intellect. He is not able to resist the distractions of the senses. Without a strong will he is pulled in different directions. In his ethics, Kant emphasised the importance of the will and its autonomy. The will in man gives him distinction. In his *Metaphysics of Morals* Kant said at the very outset, "Nothing can possibly be conceived in the world, or even out of it, which can be called good without qualification except a goodwill.' All other things in the world including intelligence, courage, judgement, resolution etc., are good but these may become bad if the will which is to make use of them is not good. "Goodwill is good not because of what it produces, but simply by virtue of the volition." It is the element of goodwill in action, that is, the motivation of action, that Kant valued rightly above everything else. Goodwill is not subjected to any condition. Kant went ot the extent of saying that "if with its greatest effort the goodwill should yet achieve nothing,-and there should remain only the goodwill, like a jewel it would still shine by its own light, as a thing which has its whole value in itself."

As the will is good in itself and is not subjected to any external factor, an action done out of goodwill, i.e. rational attitude of doing it, is for the sake of performing duty. Kant made the second proposition of duty after explaining the meaning of goodwill. The two concepts are inseparably related because an action done out of goodwill has no other motive but the performance of duty. A man, who acts as a rational being cannot be guided by any motive except duty. A doctor who attends a patient with the motive of extracting a huge fee is not acting as a rational being: to act as a rational being would be to perform his duty of helping the patient. According to Kant, "an action done from duty derives its moral worth, not from the purpose which is to be attained by it, but from the maxim by which it is determined, and therefore does not depend on the realisation of the object of the action but merely on the principle of volition by which the action has taken place, without regard to any object of desire." Thus, we are taken to the third proposition of moral law or the categorical imperative.

The Categorical Imperative and the Moral Law

If action should be done out of goodwill or rational consideration and with the motive of duty, what should be the guiding principle or the law before us? For explaining the nature of law which is binding on all rational beings Kant took pains in elaborating the concept of the categorical imperative. What is the nature of law as the guiding principle? To put it differently, what is that law which determines the goodness of our will? To begin with, Kant explained the qualification of such a law. A law to be the supreme guiding principle of actions must be something which may be counter to inclinations. The phenomenal nature of appetities feels the pressure of inclinations but reason is able to resist such pressures. Besides this, the law is something which is equally binding on all human beings in like circumstances. It has to be a universal principle prescribing a specific type of action. A law in the sense in which Kant used the term is a command imposed by a will. The moral law is not like a civil law imposed on men from outside; it is imposed by man's own reason as a moral obligation.

To repeat the point once again, an action done out of goodwill is action done for the sake of duty. The principle for such action is the moral law. Moral law is a rational principle of action imposed on each and every human being by his own reason. Since it implies no distinction as for its applicability, it is an objective principle giving moral validity to the motive for an action. Kant said, "Since moral laws ought to hold good for every rational creature we must derive them from the general conception of a rational being." The essence of being a rational creature consists in two things—that he is conscious of the law according to which he acts; that he acts according to the law of his nature as a rational being. According to Kant, "Everything in nature works according to laws. Rational beings alone have the faculty of acting according to the conception of laws — that is, have a will. Since the deduction of actions from principles requires reason, the will is nothing but practical reason."

An objective principle in so far as it is obligatory for a will is called a command (of reason) and the formula of a command is an imperative. "All imperatives are expressed by the word ought."

An imperative is a command to do something. All imperatives appear in our finite human condition as principles of obligation. Imperatives are of two kinds: hypothetical and categorical. Hypothetical imperative is a principle of action which is accepted, not on its own merits but simply as a condition for achieving some desired end. It may differ from man to man and acceptance of it involves some end. It is a kind of command which cannot be disobeyed without incurring some loss or suffering, hence under compulsions one has to

work according to it. There is always a condition involved, that is if the command is not obeyed one should be prepared for consequences.

A categorical imperative is an unconditional command for an action and represents objective necessity without reference to any end. As a command of morality, it is binding on all rational beings as a law which must be obeyed and followed even in opposition to inclinations. Making a distinction between the two kinds of imperatives, Kant said, "When I conceive of a hypothetical imperative I do not know what it will contain until I am given the conditional clause, the statement of the end aimed at. But when I conceive of a categorical imperative, I know at once what it contains. It contains only the law and the necessity that the maxim — the subjective principle of action — shall conform to the law." There is no other condition restricting the law and therefore, it is categorical. Such an imperative can be only one expressed as : "Act only on that maxim whereby thou canst at the same time will that it should become a universal law." This may be taken to mean : "Act only on maxims such that in adopting them you can at the same time wish that they be adopted by all men and always."

The moral law is unconditional. "It is categorical since it holds absolutely and without qualification. It is imperative since it is a command that ought to be obeyed. The categorical imperative is rational, since it is apprehended intuitively by the reason and is logically consistent, it is a *priori,* since it can be known in advance to apply to every possible problem that may arise in experience. The moral law is *a priori* and indicates what ought to be done under all circumstances. To do one's duty is a categorical imperative, that is rational and a *priori,* one ought to do one's duty under all circumstances whatsoever; this is intuitively evident to reason. It is known to be true in advance of any specific situation that may ever come up." W.D. Ross in his commentary on Kant's *Metaphysics of Morals* has brought out some implications of Kant's categorical imperative in an interesting way. According to him, Kant has done two things in his explanation : First, "If duty is to have any legislative authority, it can only be expressed in categorical, not in hypothetical imperatives." Secondly, "Kant has exhibited the content of the categorical imperative which must contain the principle of all duty." Thus, in simple language we may say that for Kant, men as rational beings can act according to their reason. Once they decide to obey their reason,

regardless of other considerations, their actions are bound to be right because then they will act for the sake of duty. The categorical imperative is a rational principle of action, binding on all rational beings.

Besides the first formulation of the categorical imperative in the form of the moral law becoming a universal principle of action, Kant introduced two other formulations in his moral theory to settle the point. In the second formulation, he made the conception of an end the ground of self-determination of the will. On the principle of rationality every man should consider his own existence as an end and treat every other also as end. As a practical imperative it may be stated: "So act as to treat humanity, whether in your own person or in that of any other, never as a means only but in every case as an end also." Properly understood, it implies an expectation from all rational beings to respect each other and never to think of using others as means. Any kind of exploitation in society where people are treated as means and not ends is immoral for Kant. Taken together, the first two formulations, instead of prescribing particular rules of behaviour, provide two tests to which any such rule may and should be submitted: the character of universal bindingness; and that it should manifest respect for human beings as ends in oneself and in others.

Kant gave the third formulation of categorical imperative in the form of "the idea of will of every rational being as a universally legislative will." The will of every man is the supreme legislative authority and therefore he is bound by his own will and nothing else. For Kant, the "principle of moral conduct is morally binding on me if and only if I can regard it as a law which I impose on myself." Moral law is not something imposed from outside. It is a product of our own reason. Thus, in the third formulation Kant put a great responsibility on all men to behave as rational beings. The true principle of action is capable of becoming a universal law and exhorts all men to treat everyone, including himself as an end not as a means to some other end. Once these two rules are accepted, the third will naturally follow that man will be slave to nothing except his own reason as the absolute legislative authority.

6

INDIAN ETHICS

Sources of Indian Ethics

In Indian thought, ethics, mataphysics and aesthetics are intricately interrelated that it is difficult to understand any of them in isolation. The deeply spiritual outlook of Indian thinkers led to the development of a comprehensive philosophy consisting of firm faith in the existence of God, the respect for basic human values and a strong logical and critical temperament. In short the ultimate values of beauty, goodness and truth have been central to Indian thought right from the beginning. Therefore, when we examine the sources of Indian ethics, we must keep in view the entire scriptural literature as well as the intellectual development through philosophical systems.

The sources of Indian ethics may be traced to the entire spectrum of Indian thought consisting of three broad divisions:

1. The *Sruti* or primary revelations. In this category, we have the Vedas and the *Upanishads.*
2. The *Smriti* or secondary revelations. In this category we have *Manusmriti, Yajnavalkya Smriti, Dharmashastra,* the epics particularly the *Mahabharata* and the *Bhagvad Gita.*
3. The six systems of philosophy.

The *Vedas* and the *Upanishads* constitute the fountainhead of Indian philosophy, religion and culture. They are taken as the result of divine inspiration and hence, considered as primary revelation. The ancient dictum of the *Vedas* are *Satya* (Truth as Being) and *Rita* (Truth as Law) which are the primary principles of Reality. They constitute the foundation of the canons of *dharma* or a life of righteousness. The *Vedas* also emphasise the importance of *karma* as the mataphysical and psychological force which determines a man's future life. The vedic sages expressed equal love for humanity, nature and God. This was manifested in the call of the Rigveda for unity in thought, word and deed among people in the larger interest of peace and happiness. Such messages have great relevance in our own age. The concept of God which the *Vedas* visualised combined in Himself aesthetic beauty, ethical goodness, spiritual reality, all in one.

The Rigveda gives two code words *satya* and *rita*. The word *satya* signifies the eternal spiritual principle rooted in the Absolute. It is the integrating law of the cosmos. *Rita* is the principle in its working process. It manifests the application and function of *satya* as the operating rule of the universe. Sometimes *rita* is interpreted as the original principle of being and *satya* as its manifestation. On the whole the two words show the deep concern of the vedic sages for the well-being of all. In the *Vedas* the concept of sacrifice is used in a very meaningful sense, in the sense of living for the sake of others. The whole universe is regarded as an act of sacrifice by God. All good actions are a kind of *yajna* or sacrifice and imply an element of rising above petty self-interest. In the words of Swami Krishnananda, "To the seers of the Vedas, life is a joy of sacrifice, and a daily visualisation of Divinity in all Nature."* The *Vedas* also recognise the law of *karma* as the operative principle determining future life. One's future life depends on the way one lives the present life.

With the *Vedas* as the source of Indian ethics, the *Upanishads* are metaphysical and spiritual with firm belief in the reality of Brahman. The *Upanishads* emphasise the importance of ethical discipline as preparation for realisation of the supreme. The ideal human life consists of four stages — studentship, householder, retired life from active participation in worldly affairs and finally, the stage of total dedication for service and realisation of Brahman. In this way, every man reaches a stage when he is free from all desires and craving. The spiritual progress is open for those who respect moral values and tranquillity of mind *(sama),* self-control *(dama),* freedom from compulsive activity *(uparati),* fortitude *(titiksha),* faith in the ideal *(sradha)* and power of concentration of mind *(samadhana).* Unless our conduct and actions are good and we have attained composure of mind and control of senses, we cannot realise the ultimate reality (Brahman).

On close examination of the Upanishadic literature, it becomes very clear that a strong foundation was laid down for the subsequent deve-lopment of ethical philosophy. The Upanishadic teachers asked men to be charitable and compassionate. Emphasis was laid on the necessity for restraint of the senses and love for creation besides the spirit of self-sacrifice as moral prerequisites for spiritual perfection. The teacher addresses his students to "speak truth, practise righteousness, do not neglect sacred duty. Let the mother be your god, let the

* Swami Krishnananda: *Religion and Philosophic Thought in India.*

father be your god, let the teacher be your god, let the guest be your god. Practise only noble deeds."* For the complete transformation of human personality and for the moral perfection of individual and society, the Upanishads give specific practical ethical instructions. The ideal of universal love which forms the essential part of our religious and cultural tradition is declared as the real achievement for man — "See Yourself in all beings and all beings in yourself."

Another source of Indian ethics are the *Smritis* consisting of *Dharmashastras*, the epics and the ***Bhagvad Gita***. We may begin with the epics which are unique in their language and content. If one is unable to read the vast ancient Indian literature and yet wants to know Indian religion, ethics and philosophy, he can safely go through the two epics — the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*. These are the epics of life with detailed exposition of practical ethics through the life and deeds of godly men. The *Ramayana* is an account of the deeds of a divinely great hero who set an example for the entire human race. The epic deals with an ideal condition of humaneness, a sense of brotherhood, obedience to moral law, firmness of character, honesty, sacrifice and unbounded goodness. The *Mahabharata* has a more profound theme, which involves history, mythology, ethics and mataphysics. It sets a lofty ideal for men. The authors of these epics Valmiki and Vyasa can be considered as the makers of Indian culture including both religion and morality. From generation to generation these epics have exercised a profound influence on the minds of Indians and cemented the people belonging to different parts of the country into a single whole.

The *Mahabharata* declares, "Whatever is here (i.e. in this epic) whether concerning ethics, politics, human well-being or spiritual salvation, is elsewhere; what is not found here will not be found anywhere else." It is explained that life is a journey and its meaning lies in the practice of *dharma*, virtue triumphs in the end and vice is put down by the universal justice. The concept of *dharma* has been explained in detail with illustrations. Dharma is supreme in this world since it brings material prosperity (*artha*), fulfilment of wishes *(kama)* and final liberation *(moksha)*. The essence of *dharma* is that one should do to others what one would like others to do to oneself. One should be able to sacrifice small good for the greater good. Attaching great importance to non-violence and attitude of

* Swami Krishnananda: *Religion and Philosophic Thought in India.*

goodwill and universal brotherhood, the *Mahabharata* laid down the basis of practical morality for all ages to come. The statements, *Ahimsa parmodharma* and "liberal minded persons are those who consider the whole world as a family" *(Ayam Nija Paroveti Ganana Laguchet sam — Vasudheiv Katumbhukam)* clearly reveal the mind and temperament of the founders of Indian ethics.

Hindu *Dharmashastras* constitute another very important source of Indian ethics in which detailed rules of conduct and practical moral instructions are given keeping in view the individual and social interest. *Manu-smriti* is the foremost among the *Dharmashastras*. According to Manu, *dharma* is to be known through the *Vedas, Smritis*, conduct of the saints and lastly one's own purified conscience. By following *dharma* one attains perfection. Manu prescribed duties for all the four stages of life and four different categories of persons in the society.

The *Smritis* are the principal codes of social law. They lay down the laws which regulate national, communal, family and individual obligations in general as well as in particular. Men are advised to exercise control over their mind and to maintain a state of equilibrium of thought. In this way one can put an end to all inclinations to unrighteousness. In India life has always been regarded as a progressive transcendence from the stage of matter to the realisation of the supreme spiritual bliss *(annamayajiva to param-ananda)*. For this the *Smritis* have classified the four major human values or ends in life as a scheme of four-fold pursuits of existence (*purusharthas*). These are practice of righteousness *(dharma)*, efforts for earning necessary material values *(artha)*, the fulfilment of socially permissible desires by honest means *(kama)* and the effort to attain liberation of the self (*moksha*). These are based on understanding of man's relation with the world. These values are also related to the plan of life arranged into the four stages allowing full opportunity for the fulfilment of man's physical material as well as spiritual aspirations. While *dharma* is a value for all regardless of the stages, *artha* and *kama* are for the second and the third stage respectively. The fourth stage of *sanyasa* is the period of selfless service to mankind for the sake of self- perfection. Thus, the path of liberation *(moksha)* is paved for man while living in this world. Thus, in the system of Indian ethics and values man is advised to perform duties according to his essential nature *(svabhava)* and position in life *(svadharma)*. This is the only way for moral perfection.

The *Bhagvad Gita* is the book of practical ethics and, therefore, it is usually considered as one of the principal sources of Indian ethics. The background of the battlefield in which the Lord Himself delivered the greatest sermon is symbolic of the world in which we live. God descended in the form of supreme teacher to guide his disciple Arjuna, the representative of mankind unable to decide upon the right course of action. The moral dilemma which we all encounter on account of contingencies of life often leads to indecision, wrong decision and sometime to total moral inertia. The *Gita* can be considered as the true moral guide to help a common man in his day-to-day life. The doctrine of *karma-yoga* and the ideal of *stathapragya* constitute a complete ethical theory. Therefore, while examining the sources of Indian ethics the *Bhagvad Gita* cannot be ignored.

Lastly, the source of Indian ethics may be traced in the systems of Indian philosophy. This is particularly true because ethics and mataphysics have been closely related to each other. For the realisation of mataphysical ideals, ethics or ethical preparation was always considered as a necessary preconditon. With the exception of the materialistic ethics of the Charavakas and non-vedic school of Jainism and Buddhism, all other systems of Indian philosophy have devoted considerable attention to the development of ethical theory in support of their logical and epistemological views.

The Charavaka philosophy put forward its ethical theory based on the views that life in this world is the only real life. Nothing precedes and nothing succeeds our present conscious existence. Hence, our foremost moral duty is to make the most of this life. According to Charavaka, the theory of *karma* asks man to sacrifice the present for the sake of an illusory future life. The Charavakas rejected the concepts of soul, god and rebirth. The two schools of Jainism and Buddhism drew their teachings from Lord Mahavira and Lord Buddha respectively instead of the *Vedas*. Both schools are primarily ethical as they laid the greatest emphasis on the purity of life and purity of conduct. It is generally recognised that these two schools of ethical philosophy made a remarkable contribution to the history of Indian ethics.

As distinct from the *Smritis* and the ethical schools of Jainism and Buddhism, the six schools of Indian philosophy are mainly logical and mataphysical. The ethical doctrines developed in these schools are integrally linked to their metaphysics. These schools hold that improvement of conduct, purification of life and mental as well as

physical discipline are necessary for the realisation of liberation or *moksha*. A man who has no regard for moral values and leads a life without the necessary moral discipline cannot aspire to gain true knowledge and attain liberation. So long as we live in this world, the concepts of right and wrong, good and bad are very relevent to us. The Advaita Vedanta of Sankara particularly recognises the importance of ethics on the empirical level. Although the systems of philosophy are not like the epics and the *Smritis*, yet morality has been inseparably related to religion and philosophy in India.

Types of Indian Ethics

In India religion and ethics have always been closely related and it would not be wrong if we say that Hinduism is primarily an ethical religion. Purity of life and conduct is the necessary prerequisite for religious faith and practice. The only difference between the Indian and the Western point of view has been that ethics in India is not only inseparably related with religion but also with politics and metaphy-sics. Therefore, a discussion of the different types of Indian ethics becomes somewhat difficult.

The Four Purusharthas

Ethical questions have been discussed widely in the religious and philosophical scriptures as well as in the *Puranas*, the epics and *Dharmashastras*. But in this vast literature there is no discussion of the different types of Indian ethics. However, we shall now try to determine certain distinct forms of Indian ethical theories. This will help in developing a clear perspective about Indian ethics. Our culture and social philosophy are based on a definite value system with the supreme objective of total transformation of life and a gradual perfection of conduct and being. For this purpose, the ancient sages, who were the founders of Indian culture, laid down four supreme ends of life *(the four purusharthas)*. These are happiness, wealth, virtues and liberation. Happiness or *kama* implied desires. Every man has certain physical and emotional desires and their fulfilment gives happiness. No system of practical ethics can overlook this fact relating to worldly desires and the consequent tendency to seek happiness. But for the satisfaction of desires, there must be proper means. Here comes the second end *(purushartha)*, wealth or *artha*. Wealth helps in the satisfaction of material, biological and economic desires. Lack of wealth weakens human resolve and often leads to adopting illegal and immoral ways for obtaining satisfaction. Therefore, under the Indian

system of ethics, it is permissible to acquire wealth by the right means. Virtues refer to *dharma* or the moral laws as the regulating force of life. While happiness is superior to wealth, virtue is superior to both happiness and wealth. Virtue is good in itself as it constitutes man's essential nature. *Dharma* controls instincts, impulses, desires and emotions by the help of reason. A man who lives a virtuous life and earns his living by valid means and uses those means for his physical and emotional satisfaction can hope to ultimately attain liberation. Attaining liberation is the highest goal of life and it amounts to the realisation of man's real nature which is spiritual and beyond space-time limitations. Liberation or *moksha* is the fourth and final *purushartha*.

Ethics of Charavaka School

The Charavaka school of Indian philosophy is well known for its characteristically different view in metaphysics, epistemology and ethics. Charavaka ethics is similar to Greek hedonism of Aristippus and Epricureans. This school believes that the physical body consisting of the five senses is the only reality and it is the moral duty of each man to seek more and more happiness for himself. The means are not important. What is important is the end, that is, happiness — physical and mental. The Charavaka school completely rules out possibility of future life and hence, the theory of *karma* and the concepts of reward and punishment after death had no value for them. According to Charavaka ethics all our action should be performed in such a way that we get only happiness with little or no pain. This is the supreme end of life. A man who consciously or unconsciously ignores this is a fool who deceives himself. We shall again refer to Indian hedonistic ethics while discussing the standards of moral judgements.

Ethics of the Law of Karma

After dealing briefly with two extremely different types of Indian ethics, we may now discuss the ethics of the law of *karma*. A man born in this world finds himself surrounded by personal and social needs. He has no choice but to act since inaction is not only opposed to action but also opposed to life. The ethical problem of what types of actions or *karmas* are morally and socially valid arise in this context. To this question, there is only one fundamental answer and it is given by the *Srutis*, the *Smritis*, the epics and the *Puranas* and the ethical systems of Jainism and Buddhism. Man is asked to follow only the right course of action based on the moral law or the law of *dharma*. One must perform action as a matter of duty keeping in view

one's essential human nature *(svabhava)* and one's position in life *(svadharma)*. The law of *karma* is related to the concept of rebirth and, therefore, only good actions *(punya-karmas)* can lead to liberation or *moksha*. Specific rules of conduct have been laid down for regulating life according to the right path. Non-violence, truthfulness, non-stealing, non-accumulation of wealth are some of the principles which guide man to the path of right action.

The *BhagvadaGita* is the most profound treatise on the ethics of the law of *karma*. It is the ethics for the practical man who has to live in this world under the stresses and strains of complicated social relations. There are moments in the life of every man when, like Arjuna, he is faced with the dilemma of what is right and what is wrong. The *Gita* lays down practical ethical ideals to be followed by all men in all situations of worldly existence. The ethics of the law of *karma* revolves around two principles. The first is the ideal of duty. Every man should perform his duty as a rational being and without attachment to the idea of possible consequences *(nishkama-karma)*. Every action is bound to produce a result, good or bad. But while performing the action, one should think of only the action in order to make it perfect. Perfect action leads to desired results. If attention is divided on action as well as its possible consequences the action cannot be perfect. Like the moral philosophy of Immunuel Kant, the *Gita* also asserts that we should act only for the sake of performing our duty and without the motive of achieving an end.

In order to support this point, the *Gita* has referred to *svadharma* and *svabhava*, i.e. one's duty according to one's position and place in life, and acting according to one's essential nature. Therefore, a soldier has to fight to the best of his training and ability and a teacher has to enlighten his students with whatever knowledge he possesses. They have to take a balanced view with regard to the pleasures and pains in the performance of their duty. In this the essential nature of man which is rational should be the absolute criterion of action. Thus, one is on the path of liberation if one performs one's duties with determination and in accordance with one's position in life and one's own rational and spiritual nature. In order to give divine sanction to the ideal ethics of *nishkama-karma*, the *Gita* presents God in a human form, delivering sermons to Arjuna the ideal representative of mankind. The situation of battlefield is symbolic as we are all engaged in the battle of life. This is the reason that the ethics of the *Gita* has made a deep impact on the moral philosophy of people

of all nationalities, generation after generation.

Ethics of Ahimsa

Lastly we may refer to the ethics of *ahimsa* or non-violence which occupies an equally important place in the ethical culture of India. The epic of *Mahabharata* refers to non-violence as the supreme form of religion *(ahimsa parmodharma)*. It is a well recognised fact that non-violence is the cardinal principle of Indian ethics. In the ethics of Jainism and Buddhism, non-violence acquired a special significance when violence against animals and small insects was also prohibited. Men are asked to avoid violence in thought, word and deed *(Mansa, Vocha and Karmana)* as a necessary condition for purity of life and human perfection. Enunciating the ethics of *ahimsa*, Buddhism emphasised the ideal of happiness for all. Violence is the sign of barbarity and breeds hatred while *ahimsa* is the characteristic of culture and promotes goodwill and fellow-feeling. Jainism is equally emphatic about the principle of non-violence. Some Jain monks even go about with veiled faces and sweep the ground while walking to show their concern for even germs in the air and the smallest insects. The Jains are asked to take their meals before sunset to avoid the possibility of any injury even to extremely small creatures who might settle on the food in the darkness. Non-violence is the first of the five vows prescribed for a follower of Jainism. In our own times Mahatma Gandhi gave a new dimension to the ethics of non-violence by giving it a positive interpretation. For him non-violence means love. It is not sufficient to avoid violence against living creatures. We must develop an attitude of love towards all. Gandhi used non-violence as the most effective instrument in solving individual and social problems. He put it into practice in his own life and proved its effectiveness and practicability.

Moral Standard

After discussing the most significant types of Indian ethics, we can now give an account of the standard of right and wrong as treated in the ethical literature of India. Several definitions of moral standard are given in the entire treatment of the subject in the scriptures and in the different systems of philosophy. Some of the main classifications are the standard as custom and tradition, the standard as social category; the standard as an end; and the standard as law.

To begin with the standard as custom and tradition, it can be safely said on the basis of evidences from ethical writings that tradition and

common consensus which form the basis of customs were accepted as the criteria of right and wrong (*Nyayamanjari* of Jayanta Bhatt). Tradition implies long-standing customs and usages that obtain among people. Customs are formed on the basis of general agreement in a society. This is the traditional standard of morality accepted even in Western ethics. The most significant feature of customary standard is that it is not open to individual criticism. Customs and traditions are formed by social agreement in view of common good. With the passage of time, conditions change and ancient customs may be found to be useless or even harmful. Thus, customs cannot be an absolute standard of right and wrong. But since customs and traditions have contributed to social unity and harmony, they have some moral validity even today.

Indian ethics also recognised social category as the moral standard. The concept of moral standard as maintenance of social equilibrium and realisation of the social good also occurs in the *Nyayamanjari*. Morality and immorality are thus accepted as social conventions varying from age to age and place to place. There is nothing constant in righteousness, nothing that is fixed by nature. On account of this relativism in the concept of social equilibrium "the Mahanirvanatantra" recommends social good as the moral standard. In the words of Prof. S.K. Maitra, "An attempt is thus made not only to get beyond the limitations of communal and regional morality but also to provide for moral progress besides order."*

The hedonistic standard of pleasure also occupies an important place in Indian ethics. The Charavakas, to whom we have already referred, are credited with this sensualistic standard of pleasure as the guiding principle of morality. This materialistic school advises men to live for pleasure and work for the maximum pleasure in life. Since the Charavaka school believes that there is no future life and the soul perishes with the disintegration of the body, one must therefore make the most of this life and make it yield maximum pleasure.

Doubts have been expressed whether the Charavakas really preached this gross hedonism. Some say that opponents of Vrahaspati (founder of this view) attributed this theory to him. However, all the schools of Indian philosophy have criticised the Charavaka sensualism. Vijnanabhiksu in his commentary on the *Samkhyasutras* condemned indiscriminate seeking of empirical pleasure and asserted that

* Maitra, S.K.—*The Ethics of Hindus*.

seeking of only material pleasure leads to pain in the end.

Like the idealistic tradition in Western ethics, we come across the standard as self-satisfaction and self-attainment or self-realisation *(atma-santosh and atma-labha)* in Indian ethics also. This conception occurs not only in the *Upanishads* but also in the works of Manu and Sankara. According to Sankara, by seeking the good the individual realises perfection and nobility of his soul. But a shortsighted and ignorant person chooses the path of pleasure. Thus, what is more important is transcendental bliss and not sensual gratification.

Indian ethics also upholds the moral standard with the purity of motives of actions as different from the consequences of actions. Happiness or unhappiness, whether of self or of others cannot by themselves constitute rightness of an action. It is only when our motives are good and we act out of a sense of duty that our action could be considered right. Thus, intention and motives are considered as the necessary conditions of rightness. Hence, right and wrong are to be determined not by the objective consequences of an action but by the nature of the subjective intention of the agent. This is an attempt to go beyond merely consequential morality to the intentional principles of right and wrong.

Lastly we may refer to the standard as law imposed by an external agency. The prescribing agency may be a superior person such as the king in a state, who is accepted as the highest earthly authority. Thus, the will of the king may determine what is right or wrong. This position was upheld by Charavaka. But according to Jainism and Buddhism, the moral law is not a prescription of a king, but the injunctions of *Arhatas* and *Buddhas* who have attained spiritual and moral perfection to be able to guide mankind on the right path. The authority of the moral law is spiritual and not physical and can be vested only in a seer or a spiritually-realised person. The Nyaya-Vaisesika school holds that moral standard is the law of righteousness as prescribed by God who is the Creator and moral governor of the world. This law is determined by the injunctions of scriptures.

In conclusion it may be said that Indian ethical theories have treated various aspects associated with the moral judgement regarding conduct and discussed all possible criteria of such judgements: Unanimity of views could not be expected as moralists belong not to one school but to several different schools of thought. At the same time this also shows how keen Indian thinkers have been on finding the criterion of right and wrong actions.

Meaning of Dharma

The term *dharma* has several connotations in the different systems of Indian philosophy. It is defined and explained in various senses in the Hindu *Dharmashastras* and other scriptural literature. However, *dharma* is certainly not identical with the term religion as it is generally used in reference to the different religions of the world. The term *dharma* has wider ethical and social implications. Etymologically it stands for all that which sustains life, which sustains the world. We shall try to examine the different uses of the term in Indian philosophy and ethics.

Dharma stands for specific functions of the mind according to the Samkhya system. Righteousness is the result of pure intention regardless of actual results of the action. Righteousness and unrighteousness are subjective categories determined by purity or impurity of intentions. For the Buddhist, *dharma* is an auspicious disposition of the mental make-up. It is an empirical and subjective category. For Jainism, *dharma* stands for certain subtle forces in atoms as the causes of specific consequences. The Vaisesika philosophy considers *dharma* as constituted of certain specific qualities of the *Atman* and the Mimansikas think that *dharma* refers to certain special acts. Thus, we find that *dharma*, according to the Samkhya, the Buddha and the Nyaya-Vaisesika systems, is essentially a subjective category determined by the Vedic injunctions.

Apart from it's philosophical usage, the term *dharma* has also been used in the social ethics of the Hindus. *Dharma* is used in the sense of virtue, righteousness and duty. Inculcation of essential human virtues constitute dharma — such as self-restraint, love and forbearance, sacrifice for the good of others *(Samyam Prem Sahishunta aur Tyag)*. There may be many other virtues but these form the basis of *dharma*. *Dharma* is used in the sense of righteousness. In the practical life of action one may be inclined towards evil as well as virtues. The virtues lead to *dharma* (righteousness) while the vices lead to *adharma*. *Dharma* or righteousness consists of virtues of the body such as charity, helping the distressed and social service; virtues of speech such as speaking truth, and politeness and finally, virtues of the mind such as kindness, unwordliness and reverence. Jainism has also asserted that virtues are *dharmas* and these are forgiveness, humility, straightforwardness, cleanliness, veracity, renunciation, sexual restraint and strenuousness.

In Indian ethics, *dharma* is one of the categories found in the

analysis of conscience. It is treated as morality and considered from the subjective as well as the objective points of view. From the subjective point of view it implies purity of intention, while from the objective point of view, dharma is considered as duty. *Manu-smriti* is the foremost among the *dharmashastras* wherein Manu has explained *dharma* in the sense of duty. According to Manu, there are common duties (*sadharnadharmas*) for all men such as cleanliness, veracity, restraint of anger, non-stealing, forgiveness, learning, control of sexuality etc. All these duties aim at individual perfection. Hindu morality aimed at making this individual free from all physical and social bonds.

Manu also refers to relative duties in respect to one's station in life *(Varnasharmadharmas)* determined by one's *ashrama*, i.e.— particular stage of life. But common duties are for all stations and all stages. There are four *varnas* and also four *ashramas* and man is supposed to perform his duties keeping in view his *varna* or caste and his particular stage of life. Sometimes these duties are classified as *samanyadharmas* and *visesadharmas* — common duties and special duties. It may be pointed out that the common duties have special significance as these are preconditions for specific duties. These are safeguards against communalism, egoism and intolerance and provide a humanitarian treatment to the persons of lower castes.

As for the special duties or *visesadharmas*, in respect of four stages of life *(Ashramas)* and four castes *(Varnavivastha)* as explained by Manu, the grouping of life into pursuit of the four *purusharthas* is the basics of the ancient ethics of India. The ethical system in India is connected with the mode of life to be lived by one as a *Brahmacharin*, the *Grihastha*, *Vanprastha* or *Sanyasin*. These are the four orders or stages of life. *Brahmacharin* is for the accumulation of *dharma*, *Grihastha* the life of the householder for the preservation of *dharma* through earning of *artha* (money) and fulfilment of *kama* (world-ly happiness). At the third stage man is supposed to perform his necessary worldly duties yet without any motive of enjoyment. He must live like *yati* or a mendicant-seer. At the last stage of *Sanyasin*, one has to abandon worldly attachments and dedicate oneself fully for one's own liberation and for service of others in the society.

As for the special duties in respect of four *varnas* or castes, Manu has laid down that one's inherent nature (*svabhava*) should determine *svadharma* (one's duties as an individual in the society). The duties obligatory for the Brahmin are teaching, accepting of gifts, and

performing of ceremonial sacrifice; the duties obligatory for the Kshatriya are protection of the society, punishing the wicked; the duties obligatory for the Vaishya are commerce and agriculture; and finally, duties obligatory for the Sudhras are being subservient to the other three castes. Thus, special duties *(visesadharmas)* of the different categories of people in the society are laid down in the Hindu *dharmashashtras*. It is for the proper functioning of the social system that such an elaborate scheme of duties is laid down. What is the basis of *varna* or caste? Answer to this is found in the ancient Indian writings. There are authoritative statements (such as in the *Bhagvad Gita* Chapter IV) and evidences to show that it could not be only birth. On the whole, the scheme of common duties and special duties is for the individual and social interests.

Coming once again to a general discussion of the meaning of *dharma*, it may be said that the essence of *dharma* is practice of fortitude, forebearance, self-control, non-appropriation, purity of thought, word and deed, truthfulness, clear understanding and freedom from anger. The principle of *dharma* is summed up in the *Mahabharata* as the attitude of not meting out to others what one would not expect others to mete out to oneself. What is contrary to one's own self should not be done with regard to others (*Atmanah Pratikulani Pareshma na Samachret*). *Dharma* amounts to the conduct which is conducive to prosperity here and spiritual blessedness hereafter. Practice of *dharma* is more than a ritual— morality is superior to external rites. A moral act presupposes a moral condition of the mind. It implies treating others in the world as members of a large family. Thus, *dharma* in Indian ethics is the eternal law which sustains the organic structure of the cosmos and not the custom or religion of a country or people.

Karma, Free Will and Gyana

Our lives are considerably determined by the operation of the law of *karma*. Etymologically *karma* means action. Its extended meaning implies the force by which every action produces an effect and later on it came to be identified with this effect itself. An action is an effort towards the achievement of an objective. It is the expression of the personality of the individual. The desire to develop relations with the external world is the spring of all actions. The technique of performing actions without producing reactionary effects is called *karma-yoga* (the *Gita*). Patanjali says in his *yoga-sutra*, that the class

of society into which one is born, the length of life which one is to live and the nature of experiences which one has to undergo are all determined by the residual potency of past *karmas*. Bondage to worldly existence is the outcome of *karma*.

There is a necessary relation between *karma* and moral life of a man as *karma* is the result of desires. Desire is yearning for the unattained, it may be egoistic or altruistic. Under desire there are certain springs of *karmas* such as *kama* or *kamana* — inclination of an object, appetite for food and drink, passion — desire for recurring pleasure. Resolve *(sankalpa)*, compassion — desire to remove suffering of others, dispassion — desire to renounce the world, and insincerity — inclination to deceive others. In *Nyayamanjari* Jayanta Bhatta has mentioned three roots of *karma*, that is, *raaga* (attraction), *devesha* (aversion) and *moha* (delusion). The entire moral life of man consisting of his good and bad actions is regulated and controlled by these springs or roots. Desire is basically a subjective condition of the mind and is not determined by external factors. Therefore, man is morally responsible for his good and bad *karmas*. *Karma* and free will are thus inseparably related. When we deny volition or free will, the concept of moral responsibility of *karmas* is automatically eliminated. A very significant part of human actions is determined by man's own subjective mental condition. Where an action is not directly perceived as being under compulsion of social relations and obligations, we know that the quality of the action was entirely determined by one's own will and resolve to act in a particular manner. For example, when one has to support one's family and act for the sake of it, it is open to oneself to resort to unfair means or to earn one's living by hard and honest efforts. We cannot talk of moral responsibility if we rule out freedom of the will to act. In Indian ethics, emphasis has been laid on purity of life and sense of discipline which result in good intentions and good motives. No one can blame external forces for his *karmas*. Freedom of the will is a necessary precondition of moral life and Indian ethics has fully subscribed to this view. Man is responsible for all his *karmas* which regulate his life here and hereafter.

From the strictly ethical point of view, *karmas* are to be performed as a matter of duty determined by one's essential nature (*svabhava*) and place in the society and life *(svadharma)*. This has been emphasised in the doctrine of *karmas*. According to Buddha, *karma* has moral significance only as subjectively willed mental

disposition. There is no inherent worth of *karma* (such as ceremonial actions), they assume ethical significance when they lead to spiritual perfection and culture. By proper discharge of the objective code of duties, *karmas* acquire righteousness. According to Sankara, there are two paths to spiritual life — the path of desires *(pravrti)* intended for participation in empirical life. Here *karma* means that which satisfies desire. The second is the path of the higher life of spirit — the life of absolute cessation of desires *(Nivriti)*; this implies disin-terested virtuous actions without any reference to worldly desires. Manu and the *Gita* have suggested a third alternative — a synthesis of two paths. In this life there cannot be absolute cessation of desires as that would mean spiritual void. So the ideal is the path of *karma* without material motives — unconditional actions to be performed from the sense of duty. Thus, one must not run away from *karmas*, but rather perform *karma* without any attachment to the idea of consequences.

Finally, a word about *karma* and *gyana*. The *Gita* has laid down three paths for spiritual perfection and *moksha*. These are *karma*, *gyana* and *bhakti*. These are equally important, equally effective and not opposed to each other. There are three important aspects of human personality, namely, will, intellect and emotion. These correspond to *karma*, *gyana* and *bhakti*. Human beings are all not the same; some are equipped with a strong will-power, others are intellectually gifted and some others are largely influenced by emotions. Thus, men with a strong will-power can achieve perfection by *karma* — disinterested discharge of duties. People with a strong intellect can follow the path of *gyana* — knowledge and wisdom. However, *karma* and *gyana* are related paths as the former leads ultimately to the latter. One has to start with *karma* — performing one's duties as a stepping stone for reaching the stage of understanding of truth *(gyana)*. A man of knowledge does not abandon the path of *karma*, he performs his duties without personal motives and for the sake of promoting social good. Thus, *karma* and *gyana* are complementary. People easily swayed by emotion can achieve *moksha* by *bhakti*, i.e. personal devotion to God.

7

PHILOSOPHY OF CULTURE

Meaning of Culture

Culture of a society implies its general way of life. A society is an organised group of individuals. For systematic living, for an organised system of mutual relationship and for peace and happiness, different societies of the world have evolved their own different cultures. Culture thus implies a general behaviour pattern of a society. It is an organised group of learned responses characteristic of a particular society. Thus customs, beliefs, languages, ways of thinking, feeling and acting constitute the culture of a society.

Individuals differ in their abilities, interests, tastes and habits, but as constituents of a social system, they share ways and patterns of thinking, feeling and doing under cultural obligation in the interest of society as a whole, culture remains a uniting factor. For this reason, it is transmitted from generation to generation through traditions, customs and conventions. Culture refers to all that man has acquired as a member of society. Defining culture, Prof. E.B. Tylor wrote "Culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society." Here capabilities imply language, techniques for making and using various tools and capability of thinking. Whatever man inherits as a part of his society in the form of ideas, habits, and values, constitutes his culture.

Culture is a value concept. From the earliest period of human society, man has created values because mere facts have never satisfied him. He has constantly examined facts in terms of meaning and values. The human tendency to evaluate factual realities in terms of ends and means is the proof of man's interest in those objects and activities which carry some value. As constituents of culture, only those ideas, habits and technical processes were evolved by man which contributed to the enrichment of life. A society wants to preserve its culture because the latter not only gives it a special identity, but also because it forms the essential basis of its life.

The conscious development of our awareness of existences is the very essence of culture. Awareness of existence in relation to physical and social environment must have been the basis of all the creative activities with which cultural life began. All the components of culture such as habits, customs and beliefs are the products of social consciousness and cater to social needs. Defining culture, Malinowski wrote, "It is essentially an instrumental reality which has come into existence to satisfy the needs of man in a manner far surpassing any direct adaptations to the environment; man has his wants as an implement-making and implement-using creature, as a communicating and discoursing member of a group, as the guardian of a traditional continuity, as a family unit within a cooperative body of men. For the development of a fuller life in all its aspects of religion, morality and aesthetics, culture has evolved in human society through the expanding ideas of mankind. The ultimate aim of culture is to give satisfaction to man and cater to various social needs; without such satisfaction social life cannot develop in its richness.

All the accumulated knowledge of mankind throughout the ages and the expanding outlook with reference to knowledge which have yielded results in science, arts and in techniques constitute culture. True culture leads men to live an organised life. In its broader sense, culture means that men should view the entire mankind as one unit. Culture is a word that overrides all artificial barriers between men. Taken in this sense, there are different levels of culture; while a society has its distinct way of life, distinct customs, beliefs and language, it is still a part of the entire human race where there are no distinctions due to the common human ideals of love, peace and universal brotherhood. Thus, culture has to develop at different levels, in a family and community on the one hand, and as a part of wider human family on the other. A truly cultured man, therefore, is conscious of his position in relation to his own community and in relation to the world. Maturity in terms of culture means the capability of admiring all good things. A man of culture identifies himself with the interest and values of the whole humanity and behaves as a guardian of values.

In his book *Notes Towards the Definition of Culture* T.S. Eliot has made some very interesting observations about the meaning of culture. According to him, culture is more a way of life than merely a sum of several activities. Being more concerned with culture as a value concept, Eliot has stressed that the characteristic activities and

interests of a cultured man centre around learning, good habits and cultivation of arts. According to him, the culture of an individual is always dependent upon the culture of a class or community, and the culture of a class remains dependent upon the culture of the whole society. Besides this, there are cultural levels on the basis of which we distinguish the cultural relationship of an individual with a group, a society and humanity at large. Culture gets transmitted through various agencies but family is the most important of these agencies. When family life fails to play its part in the transmission of values, the culture as a whole starts declining. It is the moral duty of family members to introduce young children to the cultural norms of the society, and it is the social obligation of the community to create cultural consciousness among its members.

To proceed further with our discussion of the meaning of culture, it may be pointed out that culture consists of those qualities and activities which distinguish man from animals. Animals are simply driven by impulses and instincts, needs which act on their behaviour naturally and automatically. These organic needs drive animals to different kinds of activities and the consequence of such activities is the satisfaction these needs. On the organic level, there is similarity between men and animals. But man constantly aspires and works to keep himself at a higher level and gradually transcends the limitations imposed by his biological nature. When he starts understanding the meaning and values of life, his cultural advance beings. The progress of man from animal existence to a fully cultured life involves several stages. Consciousness about the power of distinguishing between things on the basis of their qualities is the first stage. Man is a rational animal and rationality contributes to his superiority over other animals. The consciousness about the importance of freedom in human life marks a further progress. Man attains freedom by learning to control his natural and social environment. By attaining freedom, man is able to create values and thus transcends the biological life of needs. He not only learns to create and appreciate values, but also consciously exerts to realise these values. In the process of cultural progress, man develops the desire to live in conscious relationship with the totality of existence.

The cultural progress of man through various stages of development should not be taken to mean that culture itself is a static concept. As social consciousness increases, culture grows with the general evolutionary process. The study of the development of culture

shows that it has been changing from the earliest periods of human history. During the first stage of human history, religious and ethical values formed the foundation of culture. In the next phase of development intellectual and aesthetic values together with religion and ethical values formed the basis of culture. Culture found expression through poetry, drama, painting and other artistic activities. In the subsequent phase of social development, various philosophical theories and concepts influenced the formation of cultural values. More recently, science has revolutionised human thinking and outlook. The scientific culture of today has stressed rationality and has dispelled dogmas and superstitions. Thus, if we think that culture represents only the norms created by earlier generations and we must follow them dogmatically, we can be sure that it is a dead culture.

What is, the aim and purpose of culture? It is to ensure human happiness by conscious responses to living conditions and by working out a harmony between the three cognitive faculties in man — the intellect, the senses and the imagination. Culture aims at producing a free spirit, in the deepest sense: free, that is to say, from the fanaticisms of religion, from the fanaticisms of science and from the fanaticisms of social beliefs. In other words, we may say that the whole purpose of culture is to enable us to enjoy life with a consciousness that has been purged to mental rigidities. Whatever impedes the free and relaxed spontaneity of mind is to be considered as an evil.

Culture stands for values and activities which contribute to the enrichment of human life. The enriched life is characterised by expansion of consciousness. Culture is not the sole instrument of human progress, but real progress cannot be measured except in terms of culture. A cultured man is endowed with attributes and powers worthy of human beings. He does not live merely as an individual but readily participates in the conscious and creative life of the whole human race. A true culture extends habitual courtesy to human beings, simply because they are human beings.

In the words of Prof. N.K. Devaraja, "A man is cultured when he conducts himself consciously, creatively and impersonally." Culture creates social consciousness. A cultured man not only respects norms and values but is constantly engaged in creative activities of different kinds in the field of morality, art and literature. His assessment of things and actions is not based on personal advantage or disadvantage, but on wider human interests. A truly cultural activity is the source of happiness of all. The history of mankind is full of

examples of great people who worked for the good of all and for the preservation of moral values — Socrates, Buddha, Christ, Gandhi and Marx were impelled by the desire characteristic of men of the highest culture and worked to establish conditions in which men and women could live in the maximum possible freedom. Other men have enriched culture by launching movements for socio-political reforms to meet the moral demands of people and societies. Besides this, artists, scientists, philosophers, thinkers and prophets have all contributed to the growth and enrichment of culture.

The well-known contemporary Indian philosopher, J. Krishnamurti thinks that education is not only an aspect of culture but should be the real source of cultural development in a man. An important area of education is development of truly human qualities so that educated men and women are able to live in conscious and healthy social relationship with each other. As Krishnamurti puts it, "the function of education is to bring about a release of energy in the pursuit of goodness, truth or God, which in turn makes the individual a true human being and therefore the right kind of citizen." Education has no meaning unless it helps us in understanding the meaning and value of life with all its subtleties of extraordinary beauty, its sorrows and joys. The purpose of education is defeated if it does not develop human qualities of sympathy, tolerance, fellow-feeling and respect for life. In short, education must develop a cultural sense.

Religion is an important component and aspect of culture. As pointed out earlier, religions and ethical values constituted culture at the earliest stages of human history. Religion is, love without motive, to be generous, to be good. Religion in its real and proper sense has nothing to do with church, dogma, priest, ceremonies and ritualism. The Vedic religion of India is one of the oldest religions and it is constituted of those fundamental principles which sustain human life. Used in their proper sense, the terms religion and culture in India have been identical, implying the same principles. Ritualism, ceremonies and priesthood were introduced in religion much later. Belief in the existence of one Reality or God is inseparably associated with all religions except Buddhism and Jainism. The idea of one God has positively contributed to the development of the ideal of universal brotherhood. Unfortunately, the negative aspects of this idea have harmed human interests in so far as religion has divided mankind into different sects and communities. Removed from the cultural context, religion becomes merely a blind faith in God and fanatic attachment

with set beliefs, ritualism and priesthood. Religion in this form has played havoc in the past. Even today, the religious rivalry, communal fanaticism, mutual suspicion and hatred between men of different faiths is ample proof of the fact that once we separate religion from culture, it is bound to become the most dangerous phenomenon for mankind.

A man of culture is characterised by extreme sensitivity. A sensitive person is not only conscious of his physical and social environment, but is quick in his reactions to whatever happens around him. Where there is complete indifference about the joys and sorrows of others, where there is no feeling at the sight of human misery, where there is no desire to help others even at request, we cannot expect anything of that culture. As we have seen culture is not an abstract concept. Culture finds expression in actual life and activities. A cultured man is sensitive to the extent that he cannot tolerate injustice in any form. In the world of materialism and commercialism, the sensitivity of human beings is the first casualty. Mankind is drifting from cultured living to mechanical life. We are turning into 'robots' in flesh and blood. The future of mankind is definitely uncertain unless the creative and imaginative intellectuals all over the world make a definite and concerted attempt to propagate cultural values.

We may now sum up the discussion on the meaning of culture by stating that culture consists of those values and norms in which man is born and grows up as a social being. Human culture in its half million or more years of recorded existence has grown enormously in appliances, forms of social organisation, ideas, values, forms of entertainment and the skills which have helped man in controlling his physical environment. Culture gets transmitted from generation to generation for the sake of continuity of social life and for the preservation of values without which man cannot live as a rational and social animal. At each movement every culture remains closely involved with three sets of conditions which lie outside itself: the human organism's biological nature; the number of human beings in society, their age, sex and other features; and the landscape in which those persons live and which they exploit. Of these, the human organism remains the same all over the world while other conditions differ from culture to culture. In the preservation of the cultural identities of different societies, creative individuals play a significant part. Such people not only contribute in the fields of literature and art, but also

generate cultural consciousness among common masses through their ideas and activities. When such people stop exerting, culture starts declining.

The components of a culture can be briefly stated as, (i) Customs and traditions. Every custom has functional explanation in a society. When such explanation is not possible a custom ceases to have cultural significance; (ii) Religion and religious practices. Religion as constituent of moral principles and religion as implied in ceremonies and ritualistic practices has influenced deeply the life of man from the beginning of human civilisation; (iii) Language and literature. Culture finds expression through language and literature; (iv) Art and artistic activities — like literature. Art is an important component of culture as it implies creative activity of people; (v) Religious and social festivals. In Indian culture, religious and social festivals have very great significance in the expression of cultural life; (vi) Social norms imply norms of behaviour in a society and these differ from society to society, distinguishing different cultural patterns. Apart from these basic components of culture, there are many other elements which express the cultural life of a people. For example, we cannot ignore elements like pattern of houses, tools and implements used in the making things of common use, ornaments, motives with which people act, peoples conception of the world and ideas about man's place in the world. In short, all that which shapes life of people in the society may be included in culture.

Culture and Civilisation

Culture and civilisation are allied terms and, therefore, no discussion of culture can be complete without a word about civilisation and its relation to culture. Civilisation refers to the collective desire and will of people with reference to their physical and social environment. The physical environment consists of physical nature, the climatic conditions etc. The social environment consists of the social conditions in which we live. From the very beginning of human civilisation, man has been engaged in the process of improving the social environment to make life more and more secure and comfortable. In his attempt to improve social environment, man invented means and devices, tools and implements which have helped him in better living. As Prof. Pitrim Sorokin said, "Civilisation refers to all man-made devices."

There are different ways in which the term civilisation is defined. Culture and civilisation refer to two distinct aspects of human life.

The former implies *consciousness of values* while the latter refers to the *utilitarian aspect of living*. Civilisation refers to the scientific and technological achievements of man. In the words of John Cowper Powys, "A civilisation is culture that has risen to a level where it incorporates considerable variety, a high degree of control over the material world." History of human civilisation is the record of man's struggle to evolve better and better ways of living. In this process he has exerted his physical and mental powers. Civilisation, thus, implies constant human struggle for change, progress and betterment of living conditions. The natural tendency in man to change and improve his environment is the main cause of the continuous advancement of human civilisation.

Human beings as conscious living creatures aim at unhampered satisfaction of their desires and needs. All the techniques and goods which help us in the satisfaction of desires and in better living conditions constitute civilisation. The modern means of transport, entertainment and comfortable living indicate advancement of human civilisation. The fact of this advancement can be well understood if we compare our present age with the conditions which existed two thousand years ago. Civilisation has brought mankind closer to each other. This has made life more secure and more happy. One may say that civilisation has it's negative features as well because the future has become uncertain due to the armament race among different nations. But when we compare the positive and negative aspects of modern civilisation, we find that former is more important than the later.

Advancement of civilisation from the earliest times to the present age may be considered to depend upon two important stages. The first stage covered the neolithic passage from hunting to agriculture, that is, from the advent of man to development of agriculture as the means of existence. The next stage is covered by modern passage from agriculture to industry. Innumerable discoveries, innovations, improvements and developments were carried out by man during the course of thousands of years of civilisation. But all these developments have been mainly in relation to agriculture and industry. Agriculture has been particularly important as a component of civilisation. It made possible the development of the social institutions of villages and towns and of trade. Agriculture and animal domestication stand for gigantic strides in technical development. Farming and food production pushed man to civilisation. It was followed by specialisation

in other departments, making of things, building of houses, administration and treatment etc. Today we define civilisation as life founded on agriculture, domestication and industry and based on a high degree of occupational specialisation. Through thousands of years man has achieved accomplishments in architecture, weaving, painting, sculpture, pottery, political and economic ideology and administrative efficiency as symptoms of advancement in civilisation.

There is a close relation between civilisation and freedom. A civilised society is a free society. The growth of civilisation has been marked by gradual curtailment of unjust authority, in the extension of freedom of thought, speech and action to greater number of men and women. Where there is no freedom to men and women and they live a life of slaves under unjust power and unjust laws, the right type of physical and mental development is not possible. Desire of freedom is inborn in man. For this reason, mankind has been aspiring for free life and consistently struggled to realise greater and greater freedom. The march of human civilisation has been characterised by gradual transition from feudalism to democracy. Democracy is considered to be the best form of political-social system because it guarantees maximum freedom to individuals. All the revolutionary movements throughout the period of past history launched for the realisation of a free life.

There are three forms of freedom, from unjust authority, freedom of action under institutionalised life, and freedom from dominance of irrational impulses. When enslavement of men and women by unjust authority through unjust laws comes to an end, freedom of thinking and action is ensured. But even in a free society, there are different strata of people with different capabilities and resources. Freedom of people in such a society is ensured through institutionalised life and through enactment of laws. The civil institutions which are an integral part of civilisation safeguard the interests of different classes in the society. Growth of democracy and increasing rejection of dictatorship and feudalism is the characteristic feature of modern civilisation. Then there is another kind of freedom which characterises civilised behaviour. It is freedom from the control of irrational impulses. A civilised person is supposed to exercise greater restraint on his instincts, impulses and desires for his individual as well as social interest. This kind of restraint may be exercised by the society itself or by the individual himself.

Thus, we may say that civilisation consists of those products of man's activity which contributed to his freedom and security with

respect to both the physical and the social environment. By building up civilisation man has converted the imparative wants which swayed his animal existence into real sources of pleasure. The techniques, goods and institutions are valuable because these contribute to man's freedom. Freedom and security are the ultimate values for which civilised man is struggling. Freedom is the necessary precondition for the realisation of other values of life.

Prof. N.K. Devaraja has distinguished culture and civilisation in a beautiful way. According to him, "Both civilisation and culture are products of the creative activity of human mind. When such activity is directed towards utilitarian ends, it produces civilisation, when it operates for awakening consciousness of values it produces culture. The two aspects of creativity work together in scientific and socio-political thinking. The scientist, so far as an inventor pursues truth engages in the cultural activity, when in his capacity as inventor he seeks to harness nature to human use, he is behaving as a builder of civilisation."* The cultural activity, and the process of civilisation in the social life began simultaneously. Men could not live without values so they exerted to create culture; since there was desire to improve the conditions of life, they worked to build civilisation. Thus, culture and civilisation cater to two different aspects of human life. Life in society is neither possible without culture nor without civilisation. Both contribute to stability, happiness and security of man. Where people lack culture, a higher type of civilisation is not possible. In other words, unless people have attained a certain level of culture, they cannot evolve complex and comprehensive forms of socio-political and economic structures as democracy and socialism. Without disinterested pursuit of values by creative and imaginative men, civilisation in any advanced form can neither come to exist nor continue to exist. Both culture and civilisation have to go together.

Culture is transmitted from generation to generation as social heritage, social tradition and social heredity. But cultural values are passed on to the successive generations in the same society of like-minded people. Cultural values can hardly be transmitted from one society to another society. Every society wants to preserve its own culture and therefore, there is always a great hesitation in adopting the cultural norms of a different society. With the onset of colo-nialism in Asia, we saw the invasion of the Indian sub-continent by Western culture and education. But there was a quick reaction and

* Devaraja N.K., *Philosophy of Culture*, Kitab Mahal, Allahabad, 1963.

leaders of the Indian renaissance and other intellectuals worked hard to preserve the cultural values of India. What is known as exchange of culture between different nations these days, is primarily an effort at better understanding of the cultural traits of people living in different parts of the world. Another important point is that the norms, values, customs, traditions etc. which constitute culture do not change frequently. In this sense, culture is more or less a stable concept as compared to civilisation. It is only after generations that cultural norms undergo change under pressure from changing social needs. Civilisation implies mastery of physical and environment conditions and the knowledge of the mastery gets transmitted from society to society without difficulty on the basis of usefulness. The effects of modern civilisation have spread all over the world through increasing scientific knowledge and technological application. Civilisation is a continuous process of change and development since man is never satisfied with the existing conditions and is always eager to achieve more. In short, while we want to preserve our respective culture, we are eager to change and improve our physical and social environment.

Indian Culture

We have seen that culture of a society reflects its way of life and the general attitude towards the world. It consists of the basic moral principles which guide and regulate social life. Culture also consists of customs, religious beliefs and philosophical ideas. Due to the influence of external factors, society goes on evolving into more complex units and structures, yet it remains rooted in its cultural heritage. What is true of culture in general is equally true of Indian culture. The basis of India's cultural heritage rests upon the fundamental principles of truth, non-violence and unity of man.

The messengers of India's culture from sage Yajnavalkya down to Swami Vivekananda, Tagore and Gandhi always thought in terms of humanity and preached the ideal of universal brotherhood and unity of man. Our two great epics, the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana* are the most important sources of understanding Indian culture. Those who make distinction between men on the basis of national or communal considerations have been called ignorant in the *Mahabharata*. For liberal minded and wise men, the whole world should be like a family. In the *Bhagvad Gita*, the Lord clearly says that whosoever approaches truth with a clean mind and good actions deserves respect and love. Religion in India consists of the fundamental principles which sustain life. That is why the message of universal

brotherhood gives a spiritual dimension to Indian culture. It is the single most important factor which has attracted men since the earliest period of human civilisation.

Scientific approach towards life may be considered as another important feature of Indian culture. This finds expression in the analysis of society into classes and gradation of life into stages. The division of society into classes on the basis of work and intellectual capability and the four stages in a man's life *(Brahamcharya, Grahastha, Vanaprastha and Sanyas)* regulate not only life of a community, but also the life of an individual. With the passage of time, division of Indian society as originally envisaged *(Varna-Vivastha)* got distorted by vested interests dominated by the priestly class and thus birth became the basis of division. It gave rise to jeolousy, hatred, conflict, mutual suspicion between different sections of the Indian society. Division on the basis of birth was not sanctioned in the ancient Indian scriptures including the *Mahabharata* and the *Bhagavad Gita* (the Shantiparva of the *Mahabharata* and Chap. IV of the *Bhagvada Gita*). Some of the most respected and wisest men of ancient India were not brahmins by birth (Vyasa, Valmiki, Sanat Kumar, Janak etc.). This is ample proof that Indian culture never recognised or sanctioned the concept of high-birth and low-birth, and emphasised the right of equality of all members of the society. In our own time, Mahatma Gandhi, following the great tradition of Indian culture, launched a crusade against the evil of untouchability and distinction between individuals on the basis of birth and colour. But at the same time he advised all men to serve the society according to their respective capabilities and professions. This is essential for peace, stability and progress of the society as a whole.

From the earliest period of social development, India preached the ideal of simple living and high thinking. Respect for the basic values of life and cultivation of virtues constitute the ethical basis of India's culture. At the same time Indian culture has been affirming the joys of life. Morality is accompanied by proper aesthetic sense. Instead of preaching inactivity or escapism, Indian culture always favoured the full enjoyment of life within socially and morally permissible limits. The rich ancient literature and extremely sophisticated art manifested in the caves and temples is proof that Indians had a very healthy mind and could observe life in its different aspects. The festivals of India constitute another example of the richness of our culture. We have festival of light, festival of colours, festival of fire and so on.

Philosophy and religion constitute the intellectual basis of India's cultural heritage. But philosophy has not been a vain mental exercise nor has religion been blind. Both have influenced each other and contributed to the richness of culture. On the one hand, it has been asserted that Reality is One *(Ekam Sad Vipra Bhaudha Vadanti)* though it may be described in different ways. On the other hand, religion advocated universalism in faith.

Another important feature of Indian culture is its emphasis on action, transmigration of soul and liberation of man. Life without action is not possible, therefore, men are asked to get involved in vigorous activity. But it is said that actions performed with motive and attachment with objects lead to bondage and rebirth. On the other hand, action performed out of the sense of duty leads to liberation, and liberated man can act for the good of humanity. Since we are bound by our life to act, we must act according to our capability, place and profession in life with the right sense of duty. The concept of liberation is not necessarily associated with death nor is it to be taken as escapism or pessimism. Gautama Buddha served humanity for nearly forty years after achieving *nirvana* or liberation. A liberated man is one who always thinks in terms of humanity and never acts out of selfish motives. There are many examples of liberated persons who served mankind without any personal motive or desire of gain.

Indian culture is pervasive in character. There is no place for narrow outlook, sectarianism and communalism. It is based on the conviction that all paths lead to the same goal. The different religions refer to the different ways which men may follow for realising the truth. The spirit of tolerance and respect for all religions is the characteristic feature of Indian outlook. India always stood for charity in spirit and hospitality in mind. Differences of opinions and discussions lead to better understanding of truth. For this reason, the custodians of Indian culture have been the messengers of peace and they appealed to the fundamental unity of all men. The purpose of culture is to let the spirit grow in freedom. The development of different sects and religions in India is sufficient proof of cultural tolerance. Violence has no place in the cultural life, it is *adharma* or against religion. Thus, we may say that Indian culture is broadly characterised by scientific outlook, universalism in faith, non-violence and tolerance with emphasis on broad-mindedness, universal brotherhood and honest performance of duties.

Values in Indian culture

In general terms, an object is said to possess value when it is desired. In other words, we desire an object when we think that it has some value for us, when it can fulfil our desire and satisfy us. Thus, the term value is used mostly in economic sense. We consider money valuable because it can be exchanged for things which we want. An object possesses value because it can be exchanged with money or some other objects. When the term value is used in economic sense it is called extrinsic value — not value in itself but value in purchasing or exchanging some other object.

When the term value is used in culture, it is taken in its intrinsic sense. Speaking the truth is good not because it necessarily brings some material benefit, but because speaking the truth is good in itself and enriches the character of a man who decides to speak truth. Similarly honesty, sympathy, tolerance, benevolence are human values and cannot be measured in terms of economic gain or loss. In Indian culture, values imply basic human values which distinguish man from other animals. Cultural values are spiritual values and they cater to the spirit of man, not to his body. Truth, beauty and goodness are the highest spiritual values recognised in Indian philosophy and culture. These three supreme values correspond to three Gods — Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. This correspondence gives to the values the greatest philosophical and religious significance.

Prof. Radhakrishnan has said, "Indian culture consists of broad based directions for over all development of human personality." Hence the scheme of values recognised in Indian culture cater to the different aspects of man's personality. Spiritual values, therefore, to be more specific, are intellectual values, moral values and aesthetic values. Development of intellectual capabilities is essential for the overall development of society. For this reason, due importance was given to the acquisition of right knowledge. Knowledge has been identified with light which guides us moving ahead and in proper perspective of things. Knowledge also leads man to liberation. Spiritual values are a source of peace, calmness and happiness. For this reason great emphasis has been laid on moral values. Indian culture does not distinguish between ethics and religion. Hence, moral values are religious values. Honesty, truthfulness, tolerance, non-violence, benevolence, charity are moral or religious values. Lastly, aesthetic values cater to the cultivation of the sense of appreciation for the finer things of life. Without aesthetic values life would become dull and dreary.

The classification of spiritual values into intellectual, moral and aesthetic values has to be understood in the background of three supreme values recognised by Indian culture and philosophy. Intellectual values are subordinate to truth and imply importance of knowledge which leads to the discovery of truth. Moral or religious values are subordinate to the supreme value of goodness. Aesthetic values are subordinate to the supreme value of beauty. Indians from the very beginning have been lovers of natural beauty. Their aesthetic sense found expression through the Vedic poetry in praise of various natural elements. The temple art throughout the country, caves of Ajanta and Ellora and some of the finest pieces of sculpture are ample proof of the highest aesthetic achievements.

Western critics of Indian philosophy and culture have argued that Indian culture is characterised by fatalism, scepticism and escapism. This is a wholly incorrect view born out of incomplete understanding of philosophy and culture. As a matter of fact man is asked to get involved in vigorous activity and to enjoy life in this world. However, the materialistic or hedonistic attitude to life has not been recommended. In order to regulate human life, man's life has been divided into four stages — the stage of acquisition of knowledge *(Brahmacharya);* the stage of household life *(Grahastha)* the stage of detachment with worldly things *(Vanaprastha);* and the stage of service *(Sanyasa).* The first stage, normally up to the first twenty-five years of life, is supposed to be devoted to the preparation of leading a happy life in the world. Therefore, man is supposed to acquire right knowledge through the guidance of some able teacher and cultivate a sense of discipline and respect for human values. After the necessary preparation, man is asked to enter into worldly life. All kinds of mental and physical enjoyment is allowed within socially permissible limits. At the third stage, man is advised to develop detachment with worldly pleasures and get ready for the final stage which must be devoted to selfless service of humanity.

Corresponding to the four stages of life, there are four values of life such as, *dharma, artha, karma,* and *mokhsa. Artha* stands for economic value, *karma* for psychological value, *dharma* for moral value and *moksha* is the highest value and ultimate aim of life. Again, *dharma* is for all stages of life; *Artha* and *karma* are for the worldly life of pleasure *(Grahastha); moksha* is for the last two stages of life.

Dharma is a value for only man and it implies awareness of the

significance of righteous living. Great emphasis has been laid on *dharma* as a value to be cherished. Speaking the truth is said to be far better than many horse sacrifices (*Ashvamedhyajna*) according to the *Mahabharata.* Under *dharma,* men are asked to cultivate virtues like non-violence, love, honesty, cleanliness, control of senses, charity and self-restraint. *Dharma* also functions as value of *artha* and *kama* as it sets the criterion or standard for the latter. *Dharma* refers to the regulative principles of life and therefore, is recognised as a superior value. Sincere pursuit of *dharma* brings not only economic gains (*artha*) and worldly pleasures *(kama)* but ensures peace and contentment. In Indian culture *dharma,* therefore, has been used as having instrumental value..If one performs his duties honestly and sincerely according to his position in life, he is said to be observing *dharma.* There are general duties *(Samanyadharma)* and also specific duties *(Visesadharma)* prescribed for all men. General duties refer to the cultivation of virtuous life and habits expected of all men regardless of profession and place in life. Specific duties refer to professional actions and these differ from man to man. For example, for a teacher general duties would mean leading an honest and clean life and under specific duties it would mean carrying out his work according to expectations.

Artha is a value for biological and social life. It implies recognition of economic processes of production and consumption. Food, clothing and house have economic values and for these one has to engage in economic activities of business, agriculture and industry. But even in these *dharma* has to be observed. *Kama* refers to worldly pleasures and caters to physical and psychological aspects of life. The founders of Indian culture were realists and recognised the importance of pleasure in life. *Kama* leads to the feeling of satisfaction and relaxation of mind and body. On the other hand, physical and mental dissatisfaction leads to inevitable tension and consequently obstructs man in the higher pursuits of life.

Moksha or liberation is the highest value recognised by Indian culture. It is the ultimate aim of human life. It is interpreted as the state of absolute bliss where all sufferings come to an end. After liberation, man reaches the stage of divinity rising above personal and individual considerations. A liberated man is fit to serve humanity since he is free from the egoistic self and will have conviction in the unity of all. There are two stages of liberation. Liberation in this life (*jivanmukti*) and liberation after physical death *(videhamukti).*

Liberation in this life means leading a life free from ego and acting in the interest of all men. It implies dedication to benevolent activities. At the last stage of life, that is, *sanyasa*, man is expected to live a libe-rated life free from all selfish interests. All the sages and saints of India in the past set examples of liberated life in this world. For example, Gautama Buddha lived for forty-three years after enlighten-ment *(nirvana)* and served the suffering humanity. Such people are liberated from the cycle of birth and death after physical death *(videhmukti)*.

Indian culture has not only set ideals but also suggested means and methods for the attainment of ideals. Liberation or *moksha* is the highest value and ideal for man. For its realisation man can follow any of the four paths — the path of action *(karma)*, the path of devo-tion (*bhakti*, the path of knowledge *(jnana)*, and the path of yoga. All men are not of one type and, therefore, it would be unrealistic to pre-scribe one method for all. There are men with a strong will-power and they can follow the path of action. Some men are endowed with strong emotion and they can choose the path of devotion to God. Still others are men of high intellectual calibre and they can follow the path of knowledge. The path of yoga is for those who can practise strict physical and mental discipline for spiritual perfection and conse-quent liberation. It is clear from this account that in Indian culture the approach is very realistic and rational, devoid of all rigidities. If a man decides to do his duties honestly and faithfully follows his *dharma*, he attains liberation in this life. One need not run away from the worldly responsibilities. Similarly, a fully devoted life in the service of man and God is a liberated life. Right knowledge elevates man from the lower to the higher stage of life in which the whole world appears to be a manifestation of the divine. The path of yoga is for only those who are prepared to live under the discipline of eight means of yoga — *yama* (restraint), *niyamna* (culture), *asana* (posture), *pranayama* (breath control), *pratyahara* (withdrawal of success), *dharna* (concentration), *dhyana* (meditation), and *samadhi* (state of bliss).

In conclusion, it may be said that the emphasis of values in Indian culture is to ensure physical, intellectual and moral development of human personality. For this reason, culture is relevant to the ambi-tions and aspirations of humanity. The richness of Indian culture is manifested in only one fact, that it caters to the interests of all men regardless of faith and geographical boundaries.

8

POLITICAL IDEOLOGIES

Democracy

The term democracy is used to imply power of the people. This means that in a democratic system the real power belongs to the people. Generally, democracy is used to mean a way of life and a form of government. In both these senses, the emphasis is on justice for all, individual liberty, equality before law and fraternity. With its emphasis on these values, democracy is thought today to be an instru-ment for the fulfilment of human aspirations and for bringing about social change as well as social progress.

Democracy is a historical product. During the course of historical developments, the conditions necessary for its birth and growth were created. Nearly 2500 years ago the term was coined in the sense of equality before law. With the passage of time both its connotative and denotative uses have changed. There was a time at the beginning of human civilisation when religious priests used to rule the society. Later on, kings and warriors assumed political control and social domination. Still later, wealthy people became more powerful and even indirectly influenced kings and princes. All these systems were finally replaced by the rule of the people. The Greek civilisation was the first to use democracy in its literal sense. When Pericles spoke of democracy to Athenians he was applauded. Thus, the Greeks were the first in the West to answer the question as to how to organise a poli-tical system. The answer was organisation of small city states and direct democracy. It implied greater involvement of all people in running the social system and guarantee of political and legal equa-lity. It also meant political equality to all citizens in the state. How-ever, slaves were not treated as citizens and, therefore, were not given political rights.

The direct democracy which the Greeks evolved had its own vir-tues. In such a political system, the citizens exercised political power themselves in all affairs of the state. It meant personal and actual participation in decision-making. It was a self-governing democracy

because the ruler and the ruled were identical. As a matter of principle, direct democracy is the real democracy since citizens do not delegate their authority to their representatives who may exploit their position for their own personal benefits, as we find in most cases today. All the policy decisions, laws, and working principles were made by the people themselves. But in practice direct democracy is impossible in the world of today due to enlargement of states, increase of population and widening of the scope of state activities. It is under practical compulsions that we had to opt for indirect democracy in spite of its inevitable shortcomings. Indirect democracy is representative democracy where the rulers are different from the ruled, where we have the state on the one side and the citizens on the other. Representatives are chosen by the people for a certain period and the people are more or less at the mercy of their representatives for that period. There is no provision of recalling back the elected persons before that period. In India Jayaprakash Narayan wanted to introduce the provision in the Indian democratic system but he failed in his attempt. However, representatives are accountable to the people and can be removed from office after the expiry of their term. In the Greek system, democracy was only that system of government in which decisions were made collectively and hence there was no allowance for individual freedom. In indirect democracy, decisions are taken by representatives of people but it sanctions complete individual freedom within the provisions of the Constitution. If we compare contemporary democratic systems with that of ancient Greek democracies, we notice a great difference. During more than two thousand years, values and goals of human civilisation have changed. During this period people have been exposed to Christianity, humanism, reformation, modern conception of natural law and liberalism. Today democracy implies values of which Greeks were not even aware. Our discussion of democracy has to be in the light of changed human situation and the present human aspirations for a better life.

Democracy is the political system in which the power resides in the active *demos,* i.e. in the active people. As for the norm, or the ideal, it should mean equal power for everybody, though in practice it is the power of the active *demos*. In its political sense democracy is a form of government. It refers to a type of political organisation in which the government is run by the representatives of people elected on the basis of adult franchise. Thus, the essence of democracy is not popular participation but supremacy of the popular will. This will is

asserted through elections, which are an open expression of views. To make a political system democratic, certain basic principles are to be observed. There should be popular control of policy makers. It must ensure political equality by granting voting rights to all citizens of a certain age and a one-person-one-vote system. Political democracy and political freedom are inseparable and it implies freedom of speech, assembly, freedom of organisation and peaceful protest against wrong policies and decisions of the government. Democracy can realise its goals only if the decisions of the majority are allowed to prevail. But political democracy is bound to fail if the people are not sufficiently educated and enlightened to be able to elect wise and sincere representatives. When leaders are neither wise nor sincere political corruption and mismanagement prevail. Those who advocate democracy as the best possible political system always lay emphasis on certain essential political ideals which cannot be realised in any other political system. The ideals are, equality to all, regardless of caste, creed, sex and colour. This implies respect for human life and dignity. Individual freedom is another important ideal. It means freedom of expression and freedom of growth. Political democracy is meant to establish really representative government with the principle of majority rule. Democracy in the political sense must establish rule of law 1, otherwise it would lead to anarchy which is not rule of law but rule of might. Lastly, democracy must provide full opportunities to all citizens for discussion on matters of public and national interest.

The oldest and the most persistent connotation of democracy is in it's political sense. But political democracy has been a disappointing realisation. It is because in practice it reduces the manifold wills of millions of people to a single authority. Democracy taken in its modern sense is no longer restricted to the domain of politics and political institutions. It is a system, a way of life which gives the highest importance to individual freedom. It recognises inherent human capacity to grow and the right to progress. Democracy as a way of life has to be a social and political system in which there is willing cooperation in social life, toleration for each other, social responsibility and respect of law.

Democracy is not a state in which men act like sheep and it is not a system in which differences of opinions are not allowed. Democracy has to guard individual liberty of opinion and action with constitutional protection of minority rights. Although democracy is

literally the rule of majority, yet in real democracy here is always an opposition. Gandhi said, "Evolution of democracy is not possible if we are not prepared to hear the other side. We shut the doors of reason when we refuse to listen to our opponents." For S. Radhakrishnan, "Democracy means respect for the opponent in politics, ethics and religion." In democracy there must always be an attempt to persuade opponents by the power of reason and love. Democratic method is to replace threat by thought, revolution by resolution, and bullet by the ballot box. Democracy aims at adjustment with conflicting views. If opposition is not recognised and the opposition in parliament and legislatures is not respected, democracy degenerats into a single-party dictatorship and, consequently, the aims and ideals of such a political system are defeated. In some of mature democracies of the West like Great Britain, the leader of opposition in parliament is given the status and facilities of a minister in the government.

Discussions of democracy usually revolve round three concepts, i.e. popular sovereignty, equality and self-government. In a democratic system, the people declare their sovereignty through the Constitution although they indirectly exercise control on the government. Democracy without equality is not possible. In fact, in order to treat all people equal before law, the evaluation of a democratic political system becomes necessary. Similarly, where there is external control on political, economic and social life, the working of democratic institutions is not possible. This may be termed as democracy under state system and democracy under party system. When state controls the political, economic and social system with guarantee of justice and equality before law to all, it can be called democracy under the state system. But democracy under the party system is what we call popular democracy. When one political party controls the state it tends to be an autocratic system. The modern concept of democracy implies a multi-party system with the majority party ruling the state.

Most of the modern democracies are liberal democracies where liberty and equality are combined in the political and social system. However, there are systems in many parts of the world where there is democracy without liberalism. Men are treated on the principle of equality but no liberty is given. But such systems are not supported since liberty is the basic presupposition of a democratic system. People sometimes compare the merits of kingship and dictatorship with democracy, but a good government cannot be a substitute for self-government. Democracy is not merely a form of government but

a way of life with ideals of freedom, dignity of individual, rule of law, economic opportunity for all, social justice, political freedom, desire for peace, non-violence, peaceful coexistence and cooperative living. The development of democracy should be marked by progressive decrease of violence and growth of organised will of people.

Democracy can flourish in a society where the reasoning power and moral responsibility of the individual for active participation in the affairs of the state is respected. Democracy is an effort to found society on moral principles. Liberty is the watchword of democracy and justice is its guide. For success of a democratic system we require intelligence, sound common sense, sound system of education, clear consciousness of community, explicit public opinion, social sensitivity and effective general will. Thus, it is the only form of government consistent with human culture and civilisation. Self-government in democracy is a process of self-realisation and self-expression. Swaraj or self-government, Gandhi said, must be growth from within. Therefore, if democracy is to survive, wise and good men must take part in government. Plato said long ago, "the penalty that good men pay for refusing to take part in government is to live under the government of bad men." Real democracy will come by the acquisition of the capacity by all to resist unjust authority and by proper education of the masses.

Democracy is to be taken as a socio-political system or an order of life whose centre of interest is man. Therefore, a democratic system provides opportunities and institutions for free expression. Besides this, there hould be supremacy of popular will on basic questions of social direction and policy. A democratic state must depend on democratic methods in taking decision on vital questions of common interest. Man has three hungers, such as physical, mental and spiritual. His physical hunger is satisfied by food, clothing and shelter. The mental hunger is satisfied by knowledge, new ideas and general social education. The hunger of the spirit is satisfied by moral and religious training which elevate man from ordinary level of animals. Democracy has to create conditions for satisfaction of all these hungers. For the success of a democratic system, there are some necessary preconditions. A well integrated system of education is the first such condition. Education has to create the sense of democratic values and awareness of duties and responsibilities through its formal and nonformal methods. Faith in democracy and in the inherent goodness of man must be created. Democracy can flourish if a sustained attempt is

made to develop power and initiative in the people. To impart democratic vision and knowledge, there must be a trained cadre of leadership. Where government is of the people, by the people and for the good of all people, we have a government based on consent and on voluntary acceptance of discipline. This can come about only through education.

Democracy is an open system and it makes unique provision of peaceful adjustment between people of different faiths and political convictions. The ultimate aim of democracy is preservation of individual rights and maintenance of free economy. A democratic society must aim at development of the personality so that it has qualities like capacity of self-government, independent rational attitude, tendency of free expression, desire to compromise in the larger social interest and a strong optimism. In our own democratic system and in most of the democracies of the world, we notice three major defects. The first is a tendency to promote private self-interest over general welfare. Political power can be misused and political corruption results. Secondly, in both single-party and multi-party systems we notice that the spirit is more dominant. This may not be very conducive to rational goals. Lastly, there is no provision of recalling an elected representative if he fails to come up to the electors expectations. Due to these defects, we see expressions of general discontentment, slow economic development and increase in violence in multi-party democracies. Where there is a single-party government individual freedom of expression is denied and, therefore, there is no check on the government. For overcoming the defects of democracy, it is necessary that social education is given the highest priority. For achieving the goals of *purna swaraj* or complete freedom, social transformation by collective general will and action is the only alternative.

Socialism

At the end of the eighteenth century, two distinct revolutions in Europe shook the political and economic life of the people. The first was the French Revolution. The French Revolution was political and it asserted the right of man to liberty, equality and fraternity. The second was the Industrial Revolution which gave a great thrust to industrialisation and mass production. The industrial revolution was the result of new discoveries in the field of science and new technical inventions. It brought great economic changes in Europe and complicated the social and economic life of people. These two great events

were responsible for the rise of the capitalist system based on the idea of political rights of man like freedom and equality on the one hand, and private ownership of the means of production on the other. But the new order of capitalist society created inherent contradictions such as economic inequality, suppression of workers and concentration of wealth in a few hands. In the beginning of the nineteenth century the capitalist system was fully established in many countries of Europe.

Capitalism in Europe became the main cause of economic injustice to industrial workers. The protest of working class against exploitation led some progressive thinkers to conceive of a new vision of society which would combine political democracy with common ownership of the means of production as the best way of satisfying human aspirations. This vision of society assumed the form of socialism. In other words, socialism developed as a social, political and economic ideology when capitalism spread in the form of politico-economic system and strengthened its hold throughout Europe. The word socialism was first used in 1827 to imply common ownership of industry and cooperative life as the only alternative to capitalism. Those who conceived the idea of socialism took an optimistic view of man's capacity to cooperate with others for mutual advantage and social transformation. A social system needs change when it creates miseries instead of solving human problems. The essence of socialist ideology lies in it's suggestions of the practical means of social change.

Traces of socialist thinking can be noticed in the ideas of the ancient Greek and Roman thinkers. The publication of Thomas Moore's *Utopia* in 1516 was a landmark in the history of socialism. It presented a remarkable picture of society with equal distribution of goods and common control of means of production. The philosophy of Hegel, utilitarian ideas of Bentham and J.S. Mill, and Rousseau's attack on the privileges of the aristocracy made a great impact on minds of people in Europe and marked out the road for the socialists to follow. The civil war in England (1642) and the French Revolution contributed a great deal to the development of progressive ideas for greater economic and social justice. After the industrial revolution, people in Europe stopped attributing the causes of their misery to fate or will of supernatural powers. They realised that the real cause of their misery was the capitalist control over the means of production and distribution. In France Henri De Saint-Simon propagated the idea

of equal opportunities in life to all even in a capitalist system. All these and many other factors prepared the ground for a powerful socialist movement in the nineteenth century.

Misery and injustice is the result of division of society between the rich and the poor. We often praise the golden past when people lived a simple life sharing all things in common. With the breaking of that system, classes developed and inequalities grew. Socialism produced a new vision of society. As a political and economic theory, it presented a more rational view of life and human relationships. In the first half of the nineteenth century, Karl Marx made a tremendous contribution in systematising socialistic ideas and weaving them into a scientific theory of society.

Karl Marx, after a thorough study of the evolution of society and the existing social conditions, came to the conclusion that history was determined by class struggles. Marx predicted the disintegration of capitalism as a consequence of historical developments and emergence of the working class. He called upon the workers to unite and organise themselves into a coherent force to hasten the process of social transformation. Marx asserted that the class struggle must be carried to all spheres of social life. Since the capitalists would not voluntarily give up their position and privileges for the sake of social change, they will have to be forcibly removed to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat. This class struggle may have to take the form of a violent revolution. Once the classless society is established, men would enjoy real freedom for the first time. In 1848, modern socialist movement began in its organised form and it received proper direction and cohesion through the writings of Marx in Europe. In collaboration with Engels, Marx prepared and published the *Communist Manifesto* outlining the ideal and programme of socialistic action in 1848. It proved to be the most influential document in the history of socialism.

According to Marx, history is a continuous process of social evolution. This process takes the form of class conflict. Marx was of the view that the fate of the labour class depended on evolution and reconstruction of a new society. In the words of Norman Mackenzie, "Marx was not a fatalist. He did not believe that with the fall of Capitalist class the labour class would automatically and necessarily come out victorious. He emphasised that men are always engaged in making their own history and they remain free to some extent in determining the conditions and situations. Therefore, it is necessary to

work for socialistic ideals." Marx emphasised the need for labour movement in a capitalist society for forcible control over the mechanism of production. Marx was of the opinion that in the rule of the proletariat, it would be easy to work out schemes of social reforms and general welfare. Industries and agriculture would be used for the good of society rather than profit motives.

Marx is usually and rightly regarded as the father of modern socialism and socialist movement. For thirty years, Marx elaborated and explained his socialist philosophy through writings and speeches. It was based on systematic interpretation of social evolution and a critical analysis of the existing system of production and distribution. Marxian socialism is a scientific theory of society and social reconstruction different from its earlier interpretation. The central principle of socialism is that wealth must be equally distributed among all in the society. But Marx said, "Popular socialism has followed the bourgeois economists in treating distribution as independent of the means of production, represents socialism as principally concerned with distribution." "When means of production become common property of workers, there will follow as a matter of course, a distribution of means of consumption." Thus Marx added another crucial principle that the means of introduction which generate wealth must be owned by the workers. The distribution of wealth can take place only if the means of production are controlled by the workers. As a matter of fact, the socialist programme of Marx is both evolutionary and revolutionary. Socialist society has to evolve out of a capitalist society as a result of progressive degeneration of capitalism. It is revolutionary since it emphasises the need of forcible overthrowing of the capitalists when the time is ripe because the privileged class will not voluntarily surrender it's privileges.

Socialism is a programme of transforming the economic life and constitution of society according to a defined ideal. It is the aim of socialism to transfer the means of production from private ownership to the ownership of organised society, i.e. to the state. The socialistic state is supposed to own all material factors of production and, thus, direct it's use. Socialism assumes three economic basic rights — the right to the full produce of labour, the right to existence, and the right to work. These involve the right to equal distribution of consumption goods, common ownership of means of production and common participation in the productive process. In the modern socialist states, socialisation of the means of production has replaced these

basic rights. Since all means of production are the property of the community, it alone disposes them and decides how to use them in production. The community produces, the products occrue to the community and the community decides how to use these products. In all these, the aim is proper distribution of wealth. Socialism is nothing but a theory of just distribution, and socialist movement throughout the world has been an effort to achieve this ideal.

Democracy and Socialism

We can now discuss the stand taken by the socialists who call themselves democratic socialists, and who complain against the socialism practised in Russia, China and other east European countries. There is a view that democracy and socialism mean the same thing. Democracy without socialism cannot achieve its ideals, and socialism without democracy is meaningless. This view sprang from the Hegelian point of view that history is "progress in the consciousness of freedom". Democracy is the means towards the realisation of socialism. Socialism and democracy must meet at the same goal, but are they to take the same road or different roads, is a debatable question. The dictatorship of the proletariat in Russia has been a controversial issue since founding of the Soviet Socialist Republic. Marxists overlook the importance of liberal ideas and ridicule the demand for liberty in socialist society. But it is also a fact that some of the greatest Marxists were disillusioned when they saw Marxism in practice in Russia after the great October Revolution. For example, M.N. Roy, who rubbed shoulders with the greatest Marxists did not accept Marxism as practised in Russia, and Indian Marxists like Acharya Narinder Dev, Jayaprakash Narayan and Rammanohar Lohia were forced to reinterpret socialism to fit a democratic set-up.

Orthodox socialism consistently insisted upon the class character of society and upon their revolutionary aims. It also maintained that there could be no hope of a capitalist society being transformed into a socialist society through normal democratic activities. It held the view that democracy alone could not destroy class antagonisms. For the orthodox socialists, socialism is a revolutionary doctrine of wage-earners who will use a democratic state as a preparation for revolution. But for democratic socialists, democracy and socialism are mutually complementary in a comprehensive movement of social transformation. The aim is to create conditions in which all individuals would get an equal opportunity to develop. In this sense, socialism stands for an extensive control over the basic means of wealth and culture. A democratic socialist tries to set suitable conditions for systematic transformation of the whole social system for providing freedom, equality, and social justice to all.

Democratic Socialism in India: Briefly referring to the situation it may be said that with the democratic socialists of India, socialism could not be accepted merely as an economic programme. On the basis of the experience gained by them through their association with the Western socialists, they tried to evolve a more balanced view about society based on freedom and equality. Socialism is a way of life, a mental perspective and a moral experience. It cannot be imposed through the state. Construction of a socialist society means preparing altogether new type of people. In the words of Jayaprakash Narayan, "Socialism has placed before mankind the high ideals of freedom, equality, cooperation, peace and Universal brotherhood." For this Indian socialism has accepted democracy in place of one party dictatorship or dictatorship of the proletariat. So long as man remains a slave of party or state the goal of socialism cannot be achieved. The change from capitalism to socialism must be through democratic peaceful methods. Indian socialists believed that state control on everything is bound to lead to too much dependence on it and consequently too great a concentration of power with the government. Hence, democratic socialism was thought to be the only viable alternative for the country. Democratic socialism is based on parliamentary democracy.

Explaining the thesis of democratic socialism Jayaprakash Narayan wrote, "There can be no socialism without democracy. It is a common mistake these days to think that there must be the dictatorship of the proletariat in a socialist state. This is against the teachings of Marx. The dictatorship of the proletariat has a place only in the transitional period from capitalism to socialism." He further wrote, "My picture of a socialist India is the picture of an economic and political democracy. In this democracy man will neither be slave to capitalism nor to a party or the state. Man will be free... he will be free to express his opinions and there will be opportunities for him to rise to his full moral stature." Giving the objectives of democratic socialism, Narayan wrote in the *Janata*, 1946, "The objectives of socialism are elimination of exploitation and poverty; self-development; full development of the material and moral resources of society and utilisation of the these resources in accordance with the needs and wishes of society as a whole rather than in accordance with the dictates of

profit; equitable apportionment of national wealth and social, educational and other services between all who labour and serve society. A system of social organisation that serves these ends is a socialist society." Democratic socialism has to be accepted in order to fight for certain basic human values and against exploitation, injustice and tyranny of every kind. With the growth of democracy in Asia and Africa, democratic socialism gained greater support against orthodox Marxism. But even before this different forms of socialism had appeared in Europe. These were more practical and less doctrinaire in their approach. We will now briefly discuss these in order to distinguish Marxism from the other forms of socialistic philosophies.

Fabian Socialism

In England a small group of intellectuals, interested in social problems, formed the Fabian Society in 1884. Influenced by the ideas of Marx and J.S. Mill, Bernard Shaw and Sidney Webb were the prominent members of this society. The labour class in Britain had more rights and were less dissatisfied than the other European workers. For these reasons Marxism could not gain ground in England although Marx lived there and developed his philosophy. In 1893 representatives of the workers formed an independent labour party with a general socialist programme of action. The members of the Fabian Society extended their support to the British labour party and their programme of action for social and economic reform.

The aim of Fabian Society was to promote general welfare by propagating socialism and by forcing the government of Great Britain to put into practice socialist ideals. Theoretically the Fabian Socialist agreed with Marx that society is a dynamic process of progress towards democracy and socialism. But they did not favour violent revolution; they believed that social change should be achieved through practical reforms along ordinary parliamentary lines. The Fabians were of the opinion that the conflict was not between the workers and capitalists, but rather between the community and those who grew rich through investment. Therefore, the soul of socialism for the Fabians was to secure for all members of the society, the values which society created. Values are created by the society, the whole community rather than by only the labour class. The Fabians never pretended to represent only the working class. Hence, they held the view that the ownership of the means of production must be transferred to the whole society and not to the workers alone. The process must be gradual by paying reasonable compensations. With faith in democracy the Fabian Socialists supported the democratic and peaceful methods of change. They laid emphasis on the three basic steps for achieving socialistic ideals; social legislation for safeguarding the workers' rights; public ownership of the means of production; and taxation on inheritance property and investment income.

Guild Socialism

Marxian socialism asserts the power of the proletariat over economic and social life. For this it recommended revolutionary measures for transfer of power from the capitalists to the working class. But most of the western socialists proposed slow and peaceful means for transition from capitalism to socialism. In order to realise the goal of socialism, the British intellectuals in the first and second decade of the twentieth century thought of forming labourers guilds to take control of the productive process and implement a system of just distribution. This they thought could lead to the elimination of capitalism and its evils. The idea was so appreciated by people in England that in the early years of World War I they looked at guild socialism as the real alternative to capitalism.

The guild socialists criticised the existing pattern of society on the lines of traditional socialists. They asserted that workers should have the power to determine the conditions under which they work and the right to derive profits out of what they produce. The aim of guild socialists was the complete socialisation of the means of production. What is unique in the case of guild socialism is the particular structure it envisages for the administrative organisation of the future socialist state — production is to be controlled by the workers in the specific branches of production by electing persons to manage the different aspects. Guilds are the organisation of workers in individual branches of industry. The philosophy of guild socialism revolves around three main points. First, establishment of necessity for replacing the capitalist system by a socialist one; secondly, providing a specific process by which the ideal of socialism is to be realised; and lastly, drawing up the programme of a future socialist order of society. Thus, their entire thinking is directed towards concretisation of socialist objectives and methodology.

Guild socialism is a criticism of the prevailing social structures in which there is more emphasis on the acquisition of economic power rather than on performance of the productive process. It is a protest against determinism as a result of increasing mechanisation. As a result of this mechanisation, craftsmanship and artistic talent of work-

ers get suppressed. The real economic problem according to the guild socialists, is to restore the spirit of craft among the workers. The productive process should not only develop skill among the workers, but also pride in their work, and a genuine desire to improve the quality of their products. For this mere political democracy is not enough as it does not extend beyond the state. To make society really democratic, it needs to be organised on a functional basis. Democracy must guarantee workers a substantial participation in determining the conditions of work. For the realisation of the ideals of socialism, the guild socialists suggest the method of evolution against revolution. Transition from capitalist society to guild socialist common wealth must be through the process of evolution. Economic transformation can be secured only through economic measures when the working class organisations would gradually assume greater control over the means of production. During the transition period political measures can help in economic change towards guild socialism. Guild socialits believe in gradual and peaceful displacement of the capitalists so that there is no suffering to any section of the society during the period of change. Guild socialism does not believe in workers movement or direct action.

However, guild socialism could not make great impact on socialistic thinking in the world. In fact the guild socialists interpreted socialism in such a way that it was acceptable only to the English people. They avoided the word nationalisation from their scheme as it has been always disagreable to English ears. Nationalisation was replaced by self-government in industry. All this is a deceptive and half-hearted approach to socialism. That is why guild socialism gained the support of only a few British intellectuals. The spread of socialism in the world was not influenced by it to any large extent.

Socialism and Communism

Marx used the terms socialism and communism without distinction. Following him, the Marxists until 1917 used these words in an identical sense. The political parties which considered the Communist Manifesto as their gospel called themselves socialists. The basic dogma of Marx is that socialism is to come as a matter of natural necessity because capitalism itself prepares the ground for transition to socialism, even independently of the will of people. Many socialists in Europe did not accept such a dogmatic pronouncement. When Lenin founded the Communist Party he refused to differentiate between socialism and communism as social systems. He favoured the revolutionary principles of orthodox Marxism and branded European socialists as social traitors. According to Lenin, the socialists of Europe wanted to preserve capitalism in the name of democracy and democratic methods.

The Marxists who refused to surrender to the dictates of Moscow after 1917 revolution called themselves social democrats or socialists. They agreed in principle that society must be reconstructed to eliminate all chances of economic exploitation and unequal distribution of wealth. They wanted to establish a genuinely socialist order of society, but for doing this they favoured democratic methods. They suggested that transformation from the capitalist to the socialist order must be gradual by winning the support of majority of people. Thus the method of revolution and revolutionary slogans were abandoned. The orthodox Marxists or the communists, on the other hand, were firmly committed to the method of revolution and civil war for capturing political and economic power. They expressed loyalty to the Communist Party of Russia and looked towards Moscow as the place of their pilgrimage.

In spite of this difference, the terms socialism and communism continued to be used in the same sense until 1928 when the V Congress in Moscow differentiated between the two. Accordingly a new point of distinction between socialism and communism was put forward. It was emphasised that socialism formed the stage between capitalism and communism during the course of economic evolution of mankind. Socialism was thus defined as a social system based on public control of the means of production and full management of all processes of production and distribution by a central authority. In such system there could be no equality of the portions allotted to each individual for his own consumption. Socialism must be considered by and large as the early phase of communism. The term communism is reserved for what Marx called the higher phase of evolution. Socialism is a step towards communism and not communism in itself. Those who agree with this distinction between socialism and communism, formulate two distinct statements: from each according to ability to each according to work explains the stage of socialism; from each according to ability to each according to needs is the higher stage of communism, in practice communist countries have either reached the first stage or are near that stage. The later stage in which wages will be paid according to worker's needs is yet to be achieved.

Fascism

There is a general tendency that wherever democracy fails to come up to the expectations of common men, the people start praising autocratic rule or dictatorship for protection of their rights, for rule of law, and for an end to political and economic corruption. Fascism developed in Italy in exactly such a background. From 1861 to 1922 was the period of parliamentary democracy in Italy, but due to various factors and chaotic conditions parliamentary democracy degenerated by the start of the First World War. The nationalists raised their voice against democracy and demanded aristocratic and authoritarian government with very clear imperialistic foreign policy to overcome political and economic difficulties. The consequence was the rise of fascism.

Before we discuss fascism as an organised movement in Italy it would be useful to briefly discuss the background of Benito Mussolini, the father of fascist movement in Italy. Mussolini was a revolutionary socialist with firm faith in Marxism during his youth. He worked in labour unions and was imprisoned for his activities with labourers. In 1914, when the Italian socialist party was divided on the issue of supporting war, Mussolini sided with the socialist group which opposed the war and Italy's participation in it. In 1911 he even demonstrated against departure of Italian troops for Libya. But it was not possible for Mussolini to suppress the nationalistic tendency of Italian intellectuals. He was not prepared to lose his popularity. Therefore, he changed his mind about the war and became instrumental in achieving Italy's entry into the First World War. When the war came to an end, Mussolini's popularity dwindled. The Communists swept into popularity. In order to restore his position, Mussolini decided to organise fascism as a movement against communism. It took shape on March, 23, 1919 at a meeting in Milan called by Mussolini and attended by a few of his associates. They drew up a programme for change of Italy's domestic and foreign policy in order to make Italy a really strong nation in Europe.

Thus, the fascist movement began immediately after the First World War when chaotic conditions prevailed in Italy and it was difficult for any government to carry on work against the opposition of the nationalists. In 1920 a conflict started between the workers and their opponents resulting in violence, disorder and large scale destruction of property. The fascists played a leading part in violence against workers and claimed to save Italy from communism. In the beginning,

fascism proposed a radical programme for political and economic reforms. It manifested support for workers management of industries on the pattern of Guild socialism and even suggested liberal socialist reforms. But in 1921 Mussolini abandoned his socialist thinking and organised a political party of fascists and nationalists. From that time onward the fascist movement became an anti-workers movement and operated violently for capturing power.

Mussolini did not lay down specific aims and doctrines of fascism as was the case with Marxism. Fascism, as Mussolini put it, was an empirical and practical programme without any theoretical basis. It was based on reality and demands of the current situation. When fascism took control of Italy all political parties were dissolved except the fascist party. Constitutional democracy was gradually destroyed and central control on economic life of the nation was imposed. Fascism did not recognise individual liberty. Consequently, the press was centrally controlled and criticism of the government was declared as a crime. Fascist methodology was based on propaganda, compulsion and intimidation. With this methodology the fascists of Italy claimed to reorganise and revitalise the life of people in the country.

The ultimate aim of Mussolini and his fascist rule, as declared, was to make Italy strong in all respects. The fascists tried to work out a new culture for Italian people based on repudiation of all democratic ideals and methods besides liberalism and socialism. While liberalism and socialism cater to the interests of individuals, fascism makes society the ultimate end with individuals as merely instruments for social ends. Making the society identical with the nation, the fascists of Italy declared their commitment for the glorification of the nation based on unit of language, customs and religion.

Fascism under the leadership of Mussolini did not allow violence for achieving private ends. But it advocated systematic violence for achieving political aims. For the proper guarantee of political stability and prestige of the government, Italian fascists advocated use of brute force as the proper political method to crush any dissent among workers, democrats and socialists. In a way, Mussolini contributed in imposing war discipline on Italy under the pretext of national motives. He joined hands with Nazis of Germany during the Second World War for imperialist expansion and against the forces of democracy and socialism.

Fascism as a social and political creed advocates the replacement

of the ideals of equality, freedom and right of justice by its own ideals of responsibility, discipline and willing participation in the national life. The fascists of Italy declared that they required order and efficiency rather than liberty. No one was permitted to act against the state. This was achieved by centralisation of political authority. For asserting the absolute power of the state, Mussolini often used phrases like: my command, my guidance, my irresistible domination, ruling out any possibility of opposition. Fascism suffers from a dogma that the state as sovereign and irresistible authority subordinates individual interests. Thus, the state becomes a monster that swallows individual liberty and individual interest.

In conclusion, we may briefly summarise the main features of fascism. It manifests a strong faith in the predominant organic nation in which individuals are not important. It rejects democracy and liberalism which according to it, only promote indiscipline and disorder. Fascism exhalted aristocracy and a government under strong man or men ruling through fear and force. Fascism believes in violence as a means of destroying the existing social, political and economic system, and for bringing a new order of society. It is usually supported by only industrialists, big landlords, business magnets and bankers. Fascism is pro-capitalism as it advocates private ownership of the means of production. Lastly, it is the expression of extreme nationalism overlooking international interests and responsibilities. But the condition today is such that political and economic factors bind all nations. Nations are mutually dependent. While every nation has right to develop into a strong power, it also has to respect the sovereignty of other nations. Evolution of the United Nations Organisation, the Organisation of Commonwealth Countries, the Organisation of Non-aligned Nations, after the Second World War were primarily to create conditions for making Fascism and Nazism impossible in the future. Individual freedom, equality and justice are inseparably related with civilisation. We are to look towards the higher stages of life. Fascism as the creed of brute force and violence is the expression of primitive life. It is the bourgeois resistance to socialist reforms.

Terrorism

The foremost duty of a state is to ensure safety and security of its citizens and to provide an atmosphere free from all kinds of fear so that they are able to develop physically, mentally and morally. In fact

the necessity of state was felt because man was constantly threatened by natural calamities and human violence. State as an organised entity is constantly engaged in improving its resources with the help of growing knowledge to meet natural dangers like disease, draught, floods etc. But even more than natural factors, what is threatening modern states is the phenomena of terrorism. No country is free from terrorism of one kind or the other, and the whole world is passing through terrorist activities.

What is terrorism? It is activities of some over-ambitious persons who either want to capture power or wish to overawe people with their might by creating conditions of fear, by killing innocent people and by acts of sabotage to damage public property. Terrorism cannot be considered as an altogether new development in our time. It has been present throughout the history of civilisation, though its forms and methodology have been changing. Indian mythology refers to the terrorism of demons who made life of gods impossible due to brute force. In the great Indian epic the *Mahabharata*, Bhishma explains that when men stop using their reason and fall prey to selfishness for getting the sense of duty towards others, they become terrorists. In the recent past there have been thugs, decoits and *Pindaris* who made life of people difficult, and travel impossible when the Britishers brought India under their rule.

Terrorism cannot develop without material support from some powerful agency. In a country it develops usually with the support of some unfriendly foreign agency. At times, the big powers use terrorism as a method for removing unwanted governments and for imposing rulers of their choice in other countries. As a result of this, there is no security anywhere. It is usually said that the American intelligence agency C.I.A. has played a leading part in promoting terrorism in many parts of the world. So terrorism is promoted by political groups and nations with the motive of petty political interests and imperialistic tendencies. Whatever may be the motive, there can be no two opinion about the fact that terrorism based on the method of violence and fear is harmful to mankind and must be condemned.

Terrorists exhibit no respect for life and openly violate the norms of civilised society. Terrorism in the modern age has assumed a variety of forms. The usual forms of terrorist activities are hijacking of planes, killing of innocent people, keeping hostages for fulfilment of unreasonable demands, bomb explosions and damage of public

property. In these different forms, there is no set procedure. Terrorists like to make their impact felt and therefore, they choose their victims carefully. They desire attention and their activities and usually sensational. Killing of well-known people, large scale killing of innocent people and destruction of property help in focussing attention on then for example, Kashmir terrorists based in England kidnapped and killed an Indian diplomat Ravindra Mhatre, just to show their presence. In India the Ananda Marg spread the cult of terror by propagating *Tandav nritya* (dance) with human skulls and daggers in the name of religion. The founder of the Marg, Mr. Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar or Anandamurtiji, as he is often called, became instrumental in brutal killing of scores of innocent people just to eliminate the chances of opposition and exposition of the Marg activities. Very recently, terrorism in Punjab and in other parts of India became the cause of death of hundreds of people belonging to all religions and castes. Terrorists have no religion, no morality, no culture, no responsibility. They have faith only in violence. Their violence can take any form suiting their convenience and resources. For this reason terrorism carries potential threat to civilised life in the world and must be checked effectively.

It is for all the nations of the world and the U.N.O. to take measures for the control and elimination of terrorism. All countries have to cooperate sincerely in this process in the larger interest of peace and goodwill among the nations. At the national level we may take a few steps to curb terrorism. First of all, steps should be taken to isolate terrorists. For this, it is necessary to develop greater cooperation between the public and the government. Mere governmental actions cannot eliminate terrorism from public life. Secondly, steps should be taken to remove fear from the minds of people because it is this fear which terrorists exploit for their advantage.

Besides these steps, the government must deal very firmly with terrorists who spread ill-will, hatred and separatism among people. In this, no one should be allowed to exploit religion, caste or region for separatist activities. The laws should be modified in such a way that there is speedy trial and deterrent punishment for terrorist acts. Political parties and voluntary religious and social organisations can help in this respect. They should declare total boycott of terrorist activities. Lastly, India is a multi-religious, multi-caste and multi-language country. She is committed to the ideals of democracy and secularism. Therefore, it is necessary that people are educated to

respect each other's religion and regional sentiments. The majority must protect the minority communities and minorities should contribute to the welfare of the country.

Terrorism is not a disease which can be cured by a doctor's prescription. It is a tendency to act against larger interests for narrow personal or communal gains. It can be checked by concerted social actions and legislative measures.

9

PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

The Nature of Philosophy of Religion

Religion is among the earliest and most profound forms of human activity. In tendency and outlook it can claim a near kinship with philosophy. But it is certain that man was religious long before he started philosophising. In primitive men the phenomena of nature evoked feelings of awe and wonder and this stimulated in them certain religious acts. The worship of natural phenomena like water, fire, earth, sun and moon by men during the earliest stages of history and even now is an example of religious expression. With the process of development of human civilisation, religion and religious activities, came to be associated with certain rites, ceremonies, dogmas and even superstitions. But all these acts were accepted on the basis of belief and faith. Religion was declared to be a matter of faith, not reason. As the German thinker, Auguste Sabastier said, religion is an affair of heart, not of reason and is perpetually born out of the living needs of the human spirit. The soul hampered and oppressed by the limitations of its material environment is driven to seek deliverance by an act of faith and through faith it wins the good it seeks.

Religion has made a great contribution in the preparation of a moral basis for human life. In making a distinction between religion and morality it is clear that besides faith in the existence of God or other transcendental beings, religion can not be separated from morality. All religions have extolled moral virtues and have urged men to follow the path of truth, goodness and righteousness. Religion has always worked as great factor of unity for mankind. In fact, the word religion in English is derivation of the Latin *religigare* which means to bind and this was accepted by St. Augustine. Religion was not supposed to bind people by chains but by laws, rules and injunctions so that they would not degenerate and would be able to lead a spiritually significant life. In India the word *dharam* is used for religion which may not be its exact translation. *Dharam* is that which sustains life, on which life rests. Thus, religion in its correct form consists of

principles and injunctions. The *Upanishads* issue religious injunction — (Asato Mam Sadgamya).

As observed earlier, religion as a binding force and as consisting of the essential rules of right living was accepted at a very early stage of civilisation. But somehow large parts of all religions of the world remain under the cloud of dogmas, rituals and ceremonies. Religion, being more a matter of the heart than of the head, aroused blind faith in men under the influence of emotions and sentiments. This aspect of religion did great harm to the human race. In spite of a common moral basis, religious people mostly accept the narrow and restricted meaning of religion causing complications in human relationships and creating serious problems for unity, peace and universal brotherhood. There is no dispute with religion with regard to its assertions about God, the soul and its immortality and the creation of the world. But when religion implies a sense of dependence on the supernatural, it shakes the foundation of our self-confidence and suppresses human capacity for self-expression and self-determination. Further, because of this dependence upon the supernatural, artificial barriers creep between different religious groups with the result that human unity cannot be forged.

Religion is different from theology. Religious problems are magnified when religion projects itself as theology. The word *theology* is used to denote a system of beliefs about the world and it's creation, man and God accepted uncritically as the ultimate and unquestionable truth. Thus, theology can be dogmatic. Then there is the question of which theology to accept — Christian, Muslim, Hindu or Jewish? If Christian, then Roman Catholic or Protestent? The term, therefore, requires qualification. Theology is an articulated system of religious beliefs or doctrines which has been developed from some historic religion. In intention, it is a statement of those truths which have become the working values of a given religion; and it strives to present them in an intelligible form so that they can be taught, and serves as a bond of union for a religious community. In theology the centre of religion is cult. Cults are to be explained with reference to the myths or legends associated with them. There are various causes which stimulate theological construction in a religious society — (a) the expediency of promoting religious truths in a form which can be taught; (b) the need of defining what is true in opposition to rival religion; and (c) the felt obligation of meeting the challenges articulated by science and philosophy.

Primarily, religious doctrines are designed to set forth the values of religious experience. However, at a higher stage of culture, theology seeks to invest religious beliefs with a degree of reasonableness. In its maturer form, when science and philosophy exercise their influence and challenge its claims, theology is prompted to enlarge its scope and to broaden out in the direction of a religious philosophy. The theologian seeks to unfold a world-view based on religious postulates, but presented in a rational framework. Influenced by the methods of explanation offered by science and philosophy, theology offered explanation of the nature of God, the creation and development of the world, and the origin of man. It appears that at least in intention, theology occupies a mediating position between faith on the one hand, and reason on the other. Beginning with faith, it ends by offering what purports to be a rational view of the world. But in this aspect of its development, theology has failed to advance with scientific and philosophical culture and its doctrines have not been consistent with the knowledge of the age. That is why there is a conflict between science and religion. The basis of this conflict lay in the authoritative nature of theological statements. Science refuses to admit the premises of theology while a theologian argues that the truths of these promises are divinely revealed. The position of a theologian becomes difficult because he claims rationality for his doctrines and, at the same time, refuses criticism by an appeal to authority. We may not quarrel with theology because it accepts postulates of faith on grounds of value. Faith conceived as postulates or demands which our inner life makes on the world is by no means limited in its operation to religion. It pervades practical life, and neither science nor philosophy can dispense with it. But the principle of authority to which theology appeals must not be external, but the enduring spiritual experience of which religion is the practical and institutional expression.

Philosophy of religion takes over from theology the speculative problems of religion. Philosophy is reflection on experience in order to apprehend its ultimate meaning. On the other hand a developed and living religion caters not only to the practical and spiritual interests but is also sensitive to the claims of philosophic thinking. A reflective movement within a religion lifts the religious consciousness into the region of speculative thinking. Philosophy of religion draws out the essentials of different religions. The problem of philosophy of religion is to distinguish the permanent from the accidental in religion and to exhibit those constitutive principles which underlie all religions. According to Kant, the content of religion is just the performance of our oral duties conceived as commands of God. A philosophy of religion, according to Hegel, has to make plain that all religions express the principle of religious relationship. Hegel recognised that religion was a universal and necessary attitude of the human spirit. In the growth of religious philosophy, idealistic, empirical, psychological and pragmatic tendencies have dominated at different stages. An attempt has been made in quite recent times by Comte to treat religion on purely sociological lines. One thing is sure: the philosophical treatment of religion is not a single process. It involves psychology, epistemology, ethics and mataphysics.

What is the problem and role of religion in the changed conditions of today? Religion is a genuine form of human experience and there can be no doubt about this. It is faced with a problem which is also quite genuine. For finding a solution to the problem, we have to come out of the ambit of the traditional concept of religion, based on the idea of God as the unconditioned condition. Our theoretical reason is unable to hold out any prospect of discovering a road to a kind of existence, other than and different from, ourselves and the physical world. In other words, we must enter into the world of selves and Nature in order to discover the real problem of religion. Human beings are the centre of values and Nature is the realm of facts. There must be some kind of harmony between the two. Due to ignorance *(avidya)* man cannot distinguish between his self and not-self. Not only this, desires and cravings make man blind and subdue his sense of values and feeling of obligation. Consequently, man is left in a degraded position. Human degradation is the primary cause of distress of man. Physical sciences relate merely to the physical world and are unconscious of this situation. The problem of liberation of man from his distressed condition falls outside the scope of natural sciences, psychology and even ethics. It is really the problem of religion.

Religion today must give primary consideration to the condition of man. The traditional conception of religion based on blind faith in the existence of God as the saviour of mankind is not in a position to solve this problem. This is because such religion considers human degradation due to imperfection of man against perfect God. Therefore it is suggested that man must surrender himself to the will of God. But such dependence would make man inferior to God and his consequent enslavement. This means aggravating the problem rather

than solving it. Liberation is the responsibility of man. The problem will be solved if man develops a purely human outlook and decides to live under an internally imposed discipline. This is the essence of religion in the real sense. But what we call religion is wholly ego-centric. Prayer, worship and rites, calculated to fulfil the demands of religion, are more a means of preserving the desires and cravings of flesh and blood. Religion is the remedy of the dehumanisation of man into the non-human ego and the way of his rehumanisation and restoration to the human self. Man is born as a biological being consisting of instincts and desires. So long as the accident of his biological birth holds absolute sway over him, he remains a stranger to what is human in him and in others.

Religion today must relate itself to what man essentially is. It must see that development of man should be such that he remains established in his pure and essential state. Religion must awaken man and create in him the consciousness of his real self. Without implying any mystery, religion as an enlightening force should emphasise man's sense of values and his feeling of obligation. In this sense religion is inseparable from action. Science has changed the human situation by increasing the boundaries of knowledge. Man now has greater control over Nature. But the most tragic aspect of the situation is that man has become hostile to himself which is a great setback to civilisation. Religion today must create consciousness of this situation so that man tries to develop a way of life with its basis in the recognition of man as an end in himself. There should not be excessive institutionalisation of religion as it undermines man as a human being. "Man is the greatest truth and the highest value and above him there is nothing" — religion should declare this. Religion thus conceived is the religion of man showing a road that promises to lead us to the joy of living. As Swami Yogananda said, "If religion does not influence our daily conduct, if it does not inspire everyday life then it is useless." We must take religion and God out of the sphere of belief into that daily life.

Philosophy of Religion and Theology

Philosophy of religion is the application of philosophical principles and methods to religion regarded as something given to mankind. Religion taken in its usual sense is constituted of purely emotional experiences. In philosophy of religion such experiences are raised to the speculative level. "Philosophy of religion", in the words of

George Galloway, "is the application of philosophical thought to a specific phase or stage of experience in order to determine its general meaning and value."

As it has been pointed out earlier, philosophy of religion and theo-logy differ in nature and content. When we talk about philosophy of religion, we clearly imply religion as a universal phenomenon of human experiences. On the other hand, the word theology denotes a particular system of dogmas, beliefs and ceremonies. Religions in the theological sense differ as all religions do not have identical dogmas and ceremonies. As for its nature theology is an articulated system of religious beliefs which have developed with traditional thinking. In intention it is a statement of truths which have proved to have practical values of a given religion. Theology does not criticise the religious experiences but believes in such experiences very faithfully. In other words there is no place for criticism and critical examination of religious beliefs. It rests on blind and faithful acceptance of what is given in the form of religion. Theology is based on presuppositions of religious dogmas and concepts and all the religions of the world, advanced as they are to a certain stage, present theological doctrines.

A theologian will refuse to accept that religion is all faith and no reason. As a matter of fact, in intention theology occupies a mediating position between faith and reason. Starting with faith, it ends in trying to offer a rational explanation of the world. But unfortunately theology has failed to advance with scientific and philosophical culture. Hence its doctrines about the nature and origin of the world as well as the place of man in the world, have been inconsistent with the scientific knowledge of our age. We often hear about conflict between religion and science which is due to differences in their interpretation of reality. Based on statements taken as authoritative, theology proceeded to evolve doctrines to be accepted by rational beings. A man of scientific temperament refused to start from theological premises. Theologians make their position awkward by double standard, claiming rationality for their religious doctrines and also rejecting criticism by an appeal to authority.

If we are to establish some kind of organic relation between theology and philosophy of religion and wish to show a link between faith and reason, then the principle of authority will have to be more convincing. The basis of religious authority must be shown in the spiritual experiences of mankind together with historic evolution of values.

Theologians of the world have always thought that they could express the meaning of religion in doctrinal forms valid for all times and for all generations. To be valid, the principle of authority in theology should appeal to the lasting spiritual experience of which religion is an institutional and practical expression. In this way, theology can enlarge its scope. It should not attempt to answer speculative problems of religion but hand them over to philosophers of religion for solution. Religious philosophers and theologians can cooperate in the sense that the tasks left by the latter may be completed by the former. While theology is stagnation in religion, the philosophy of religion is growing more important due to the scope of free discussion on religious issues. Theology and philosophy of religion deal with the same material yet their approach differs. In the larger interest of mankind it is desirable that theologians work with religious philosophers and willingly make assessment of their doctrines. This would help in necessary modifications of religious beliefs.

God in Religion

The idea of God is inseparably related to religion, although there are religions like Buddhism and Jainism which do not start with presupposition about the existence of God. But religious minded people have always considered the possibility of some supernatural power either as the basis of this natural world or as a source of justice and goodness against the life of limitations and misery. As Kant said, man cannot live without faith in God although existence of God cannot be proved through rational arguments. Everything in the world is subject to the limitations of time and space. Man cannot alter the course of nature and finds himself utterly helpless and powerless at the face of mighty nature. It is quite natural that he presumes the existence of a supernatural power, say God, who is supposed to control nature and is the ultimate cause of things.

Although belief in the existence of God as a part of religion is as old as the history of man on this planet people from time to time have expressed contrary views. Epicurs, the great Greek humanist maintained that if God exists, there should be some evidence of His playing a part in human affairs. In fact, there is no such evidence. There is evil and suffering in this world. Good people suffer and wicked enjoy. Therefore, to an average person doubt about the existence of God can naturally occur. However, it is quite usual to call everything we cannot explain as God. Voltaire, the well-known anti-clerical theist believed that if there were no God it would be necessary to invent him and it appears that man has done just that. Not only this men have carved the image of 'God' according to their own liking.

Deism

In traditional religious thinking there is no uniformity of view about God and the relation of God with the world. There is deistic conception of God based on the assumption that God is not part of this world but outside it. God is said to have created this world but does not suffer from the limitations to which all things are subjected. In his *Metaphysics* Aristotle referred to God as pure and forever separated from material and mutable things. God moves the world from without only as the object of His desire. In the modern age deism attracted strong and critical reaction. Carlyle ridiculed the view of God sitting idle outside the world. With the acceptance of the evolutionary theory by the scientists, the deistic conception of God was rejected as wholly unconvincing. In spite of inherent contradictions in the deistic conception one thing is worth notice. It made the concept of God as a definite, independent being as an object of worship. A religious man cannot accept God as dependent upon the world, hence, deism rightly maintained God as a transcendent being.

Pantheism

Appealing to the real instincts of religious consciousness, some thinkers with mystical tendency tried to give an intellectual justification of their belief in God. Thus pantheism was advocated against deism. God is immanent in nature and in man. Therefore, there is nothing but God in this world. God and world are identical. When Spinoza tried to explain the relation between God and the world through pantheistic explanation by the end of the eighteenth century, he had in his mind serious doubts about God as the creator of this world. It was thought that pantheism could respond to human needs and desire for unity and completeness in man's conception of the world. This vision of the universe as a single and all-pervading system appears to be the true goal. In emphasising the immanence of God, pantheism fulfils the desire of a religious spirit which wants God to be present everywhere in the world. There is nothing outside the divine care. However, patheism has also been subjected to criticism. If God is immanent, then He cannot be present in the same fulness in a stone as in a human soul. The deistic tendency to admit transcendence of God was always motivated by the desire to consider Him more than nature and finite minds.

Theism

Against deism and pantheism, there are theists who consider God both as transcendent and immanent. This view is the outcome of a purely religious motive. A theist cannot believe that the world exists independently of God. For him God appears to be present every where and whatever happens is due to His will. There is continuous revelation of God in the spirit of man. God is immanent in the world yet He is not subject to ordinary limitations which characterise the phenomenal world. To a theist God in His operation is continuously present in nature. God transcends the world of things and selves as He is not identical with them either individually or collectively. While things depend on Him and He acts on them, He is not dependent on things. The spatial and temporal world is a manifestation of the Divine will. God is infinite as He is complete and self-sufficient. He is Himself the sufficient cause and ground of all finite existences. God is absolute and the unconditioned ground of all finite existences. God is also associated with attributes of omnipotence, omnipresence and omniscience. Omnipotence means that nothing is impossible to God. "God is all powerful for He is the independent and self-sufficient ground of the being of the world." Religious consciousness rests satisfied that God is omnipresent. God is everywhere in the sense that He makes His working felt everywhere. Burdened by the consciousness of His own ignorance, man naturally thinks that his Deity is free of this defect. Omnipotence and omniscience are interconnected.

It has been said "No God, no religion." Substantiating this, John Dietrich, the humanist said, "For centuries the idea of God has been the very heart of religion." But Sir Julian Huxley wrote in 1960, "The Christian God-theory by which an omniscient, omnipotent, and omnibenevolent being permits evil and suffering — is a great burden to the human spirit." For a modern humanist, religion should be interpreted as something very different and far deeper than any belief in God. From the humanist point of view, religion is not an attempt to establish the right relation with supernatural reality but rather the up-reaching and aspiring impulse in human life. Religion is the striving for human perfection and perception of the divine in the wider context of humanism. Humanist view of religion is positive and constructive. There is nothing in it to make man grieve over the misery and suffering of the world, nor make him endlessly wait for the grace of God. Instead of being concerned about man's relation with God, the humanist is more concerned with man's relation with man.

Discarding the idea of original sin of man, humanism asserts human dignity. Respect for human dignity is the basis of peaceful relationship between human beings, races, religions and nations. Humanism in all its simplicity is the only spirituality. George Santyana said, "Supernatural religion should be treated as poetic myth to be enjoyed and understood rather than dark superstition to be abolished."

Proofs of Existence of God

In the history of philosophy we come across philosophers trying to supplement theistic faith in the existence of God with rational arguments. But such arguments have not played any part in converting non-believers to religious belief. However, proofs of the existence of God have only confirmed such a belief. So it is not out of place if we *dwell* a little on the traditional proofs of the existence of God.

The Ontological Argument

According to ontological argument, the reality of God is involved in the idea of God. In the words of Anselm (1033-1109 A.D.), "God is a being of which a greater cannot be conceived; but an idea which existed only in intellect would not be so great as one which existed in reason as well as in intellect; therefore God must be thought as necessarily existing." Another aspect of this argument is that since God is the most perfect being, he must necessarily exist as not to exist would be an imperfection. Therefore, God's perfection implies His existence.

The Causal Argument

The existence of God is inferred from the world as it is given. Probably with the cosmological argument in mind, Plato argued that every created thing must be created by some cause. The contingency of the facts within the world lead up to something which is necessary and we posit a necessary Being as the ground of the contingent. This proof is given with emphasis on the law of causation. God is argued as the first cause of all the different series of causes.

The Teleological Argument

This argument is more striking to the ordinary mind. There is order in the world and this order is taken to be the token of design and God is thought as the source of that design. This design and purpose has been imposed on the world and God can be the only agency which can impose such order and purpose.

Apart from these traditional proofs, it is suggested as a historical argument that the only sufficient reason of the widespread consciousness of God in human minds is God himself. The idea of a spiritual being could not have not travelled throughout ages in human mind if there was no reality corresponding to the idea. It cannot be believed that consciousness of God had no source and ground. Kant tried to be more convincing in his *Critique of Practical Reason* and postulated God as the moral ground. In the belief of God's existence the best solution to the problems of moral life are found, so God's existence is accepted on the basis of faith as a practical necessity.

These proofs could not establish God's existence beyond doubt and faith continued to be the basis of religion. However, the arguments could not be termed as valueless. They testify to the confidence of the human mind that reason could support the claims of faith. The Marxists denounce religion as playing a negative part in the evolution of human society and have called it opium for the masses. Consequently, the idea of God does not find any place in the Marxist dictionary. But there are many people with progressive thinking other than Marxists who admit rational and humanistic interpretation of religion. For them it is not necessary to believe in the existence of God for being religious. Religion is treated as identical to morality and is expected to find expression in thoughts and actions. Even if we accept these views about religion and God, we have to admit that the idea of God has been inseparably associated with religion from the beginning of civilisation and rise of religious consciousness. Not only this, the idea of God contributed to the development of different religions of the world. Remove God from religion and you will have nothing to present to ordinary men and women in the form of religion. The idea of God being present everywhere and watching human deeds has worked as a great deterrent factor for people who are tempted to harm others for their personal benefits. The different concepts of God have inspired mankind to adopt spiritual life. The idea of God taking human form *(avtarvad)* has always inspired Indians to follow the righteous life. Lord Krishna as a symbol of noblest manhood *(Uttampurusa)*, and Lord Ram is a model of the ideal man *(Maryadapurusa)* have been the source of Indian spirituality. Even in Islam and Christianity, the notion of God has nourished the religious conscience of Muslims and Christians. Therefore, this notion is indispensable for religion.

Religion and the Problem of Evil

We know, on the basis of our experiences, that evil is essentially relative to good, and to think of a virtue is to presuppose a vice as its counterpart. Within a system of culture, good and evil develop as necessarily related expressions of human thinking and behaviour. The close connection between good and evil is fully experienced by the religious consciousness. In this struggle with the opposing forces of good and evil, man has always sought help and strength from religion. Man's conception of evil served to determine his notion of the meaning of religion. The primitive man traced the source of good and evil into the world of divine powers. The forces in nature which cause pain, loss and frustration, which hamper human efforts were conceived to be under the domination of evil deities.

With the development of monotheistic faith in religion, the problem of evil attracted the attention of religious philosophers. The order in nature, physical and spiritual, was traced to the will of a simple being supposed to be good. The question was asked, who is responsible for discordant elements in nature, who is responsible for all the evil in human life? For a simple religious man who believes in one God as omnipotent and omnipresent Being the answer would be direct — evil is in the world but it can be overcome by the grace of God who is with man and His spiritual power is supreme. However, this practical faith does not solve the problem. During the Middle Ages evil was associated with the free will of man in order to avoid making God responsible for the fact of evil and suffering in the world. Man was created originally as good but he developed evil tendencies due to the play of his free will. Psychologically the problem was further simplified by referring to the innate mental tendencies. Due to the power of reasoning and judgement man at a certain stage of growth knows the difference between good and evil, yet he is tempted towards sin, due to psychological factors. Thus the only way to overcome evil is to help in the development of the sense of culture, consciousness about social responsibility and a reasonable moral standard.

It is an unfortunate fact that people with blind faith in the existence of God as the supreme power cannot answer the question that, if God is the all-powerful Creator of this world, why has He created evil? If he has deliberately created evil then He cannot be called all-good. Leibnitz tried to link evil with the purpose of a benevolent God. Evil is traced by Leibnitz to the necessary constitution of the complex

whole of experience. Had there been no evil, men would not understand the meaning and significance of being good. Evil is the result of a necessary imperfection of the finite world. Indian monists have made man responsible for evil. Good and evil correspond to knowledge and ignorance. Where there is ignorance, there is evil and suffering. When real knowledge is acquired evil and suffering dis appear. Even the non-believer Buddha thought that in the state of *nirvana* (state of perfect knowledge) there could not be any evil or suffering.

Distinction is made between natural evil and moral evil. Theologians believe that moral evil came first in time and natural evil was added as a penalty for human transgressions. Orthodox Christians believe that death and all sufferings were the result of man's first disobedience. Man is responsible for moral evil because moral evils spring from the activity of conscious beings. Psychologically, to be capable of sinning, a being must be capable of rational choice. Moral evil can exist only when a self-conscious subject distinguishes itself from its natural impulses and desires. Metaphysicians ask whether evil is necessary or accidental. The optimists believe that the world is good and evil is entirely subordinate to good. The pessimists think that this is not the best possible world. But a metaphysician reconciles the existence of evil with his postulate that this is a phenomenal world of limitations. At the transcendental level of noumena, there is no evil. Evil is the necessary consequence of the phenomenal character of this world.

Evil exists to give meaning to good because the two are relative terms. Evil and good are only aspects of human life and experiences. A theist argues that God deliberately created evil because in the all-good world man would have forgotten his moral and spiritual responsibilities. For others the concept of free will and moral responsibility would have been meaningless had there been no choice between good and evil. From the commonsense point of view, man is a psycho-physical being. There are biological and psychological tendencies which tempt man to live on a purely biological level alongwith other animals. But man is also a social and rational being. Thus, the distinction between good and evil has social significance and is a necessary part of human conduct. The existence of evil furnishes a ground for the moral development of man. It gives a direction to man for cultural advancement and spiritual realisation.

Some Important Religions

Hinduism

Hinduism implies the religious tradition and beliefs of the people who originally inhabited the land around the valley of Sind. That religious tradition spread to the whole of India, from the extreme north to the extreme south of the sub-continent and hence came to be known as the religion, culture and philosophy of Indians, before the growth of other religious influences.

Generally religion is associated with fixed intellectual beliefs and principles to be strictly observed in life. While this is true in the case of all other religions, in the case of Hinduism it is not true. Hinduism as a religion does not consist of set ceremonies, beliefs, dogmas or intellectual abstractions. It is more a way of living or experiencing the world. Hinduism implies a specific attitude of life, to the self and to the world. Hinduism refers to a complex religious tradition which includes beliefs, norms of life, religious faith, various forms of worship and rituals, ethical principles and cultural features. Due to this complexity and variety of attitudes and beliefs, it is almost impossible to define Hinduism and very difficult to describe it in brief.

For religion the Sanskrit word *Dharma* has been used. In English, it broadly means principles which sustain human life. Therefore, while beliefs, ceremonies, rituals and dogmas are a part of Hinduism, its main emphasis is on righteous living. For Indians, as Professor Radhakrishnan had remarked, "religion is not correct belief but righteous living." Two basic principles of religious life have been recognised and these are respect for man and unbending devotion to truth. Due to this the religious tradition of Hinduism has been characterised by broadmindedness. Recognising that there may be different approaches to God, Hinduism accepts all forms of beliefs as valid. The Upanisadic statement that truth is one although the wisemen describe it in different ways *(Ekam Sad Vipraha Bahudha Vadanti)* articulates the religious attitude of Hindus. What is called religious fanaticism born out of belief in infallibility and the claim of supremacy of religion has never been witnessed in Hinduism. This distinguishes Hinduism from all other religions.

Hinduism as a religious tradition evolved through four distinct forms. The first of its forms was Brahminical Hinduism in which stress was laid on rituals, ceremonies and other forms of religious practices which gave an orthodox form to Hinduism. Later, a more philosophic base to Hinduism evolved in the Upanishadic period

through the wisdom of learned sages and the philosophical schools. Hinduism was raised to a very high intellectual level. The third form of Hinduism was devotional theism as an alternative to Brahminical Hinduism of rituals and sacrifice. Starting from the period of the two great epics, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata,* devotional theism came down to the Bhakti movement of great Indian saints. Lastly, we have modern reformed Hinduism which preserves the Vedic and the Upanishadic tradition of religious thought while eliminating the more orthodox features. Modern religious leaders like Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, Swami Vivekananda and many others made a great effort in presenting Hinduism in its right perspective.

The entire literature of Hinduism which constitutes Hindu thought may also be divided into four parts. Religious scholars consider these as the four phases in the development of Hindu thought. In the first part we have the four Vedas and the whole of Upanishadic literature. The second part of the Hindu scriptures consists of the epics already mentioned and the *Dharmashastras* which are treatises on ethical and social philosophy. The third part consists of the six schools of Indian philosophy in the form of *sutras.* Lastly, we have literature of the scholastic period consisting of learned commentaries on the philosophical *sutras.* The whole of the literature developed during the period from 2500 B.C. to the 1600 B.C.

Hinduism has not been a prophetic religion unlike Christianity and Islam. Hence the religious faith of the Hindus has never been rigid and gives them full freedom to follow the religious practices of their choice. In this land of religion, there has never been any dearth of religious teachers to guide people on the right path. Without entertaining ill-will towards each other, people perform different religious practices. The Lord has assured in the *Bhagvad Gita,* all people irrespective of their ideas and forms of worship, shall achieve their objectives [The *Gita* Chapt. IV *(Ye Yatha Mam Prabhaudaute. . . .)*] Mankind may seek salvation at various levels and in various ways and all these ways are equally good. As Prof. Radhakrishnan has said, "Hinduism does not believe in adopting one particular idea as the standard for the whole human race." It accepts all religious notions as facts and puts them in order of their significance. For this reason Hinduism cannot be characterised as fanatic faith in an inflexible creed. From the beginning it developed an attitude of accomodation and understanding.

As pointed out earlier, religion in India is very strong. This is

proved by the abundant temples and shrines in the country. With deep religious attitude, Hindus professed their faith in God as the supreme power, the ultimate cause of things and the ultimate reality. But Hinduism has accepted different grades of worshippers: the worshippers of the personal God; the worshippers of incarnations like Rama, Krishna, and the worshippers of the forces of nature and spirits. In fact Hinduism has insisted on working steadily to improve our knowledge of God. The highest grade of worshippers are those who recognise God as the Absolute, the Brahman. At the highest level of religious development, the worshipper and the worshipped become one. In Hinduism we find polytheism, monotheism and monism without any contradiction. Historically speaking, the religious speculations in India may be said to have gone through a spiral process. The Vedic hymns described gods in terms of natural facts developing gradually into a totality of gods. But some thinkers began to speculate and thought of one primal unitary principle behind all multiplicity and diversity. By the time the *Upanishads* developed, the concept of Brahaman had evolved. However, emotionally Indians were inclined to the divine personality and to ritualism as manifested in the epics and the *Puranas.* During the *sutra* period when different philosophical schools were developing, religion itself passed into philosophy and discussion instead of devotion was thought to decide the religious issues such as the concept of reality, nature and attri butes of God, culminating in absolute monism of Advaita Vedanta. But the emotional appeal of devotion also continued.

Hinduism is unique in reconciling monism and polytheism as also form and formless Reality. Man by nature clings to form, and the formless concept of God does not appeal to everyone. The religious leaders in India were well versed with human psychology and did not impose any set notion or fixed view of God on all men. They worked to take believers in God gradually from outer worship to inner worship. Image worship in Hinduism has been an object of criticism by non-Hindus as well as Hindus *(Arya Samajis).* But Image worship has its own purpose in stimulating religious devotion among ordinary men and women. Images are only symbols of spiritual ideals and not reality in themselves. Image worship is the first stage of religious development. Worship of personal god (*saguna Brahma*) and belief in formless reality (*nirguna Brahma*) refer only to extreme levels of religious experience and knowledge. Thus symbols and shrines of God have their own validity. An average man goes to holy streams in

search of God and believes that taking a dip in holy river is a great religious act. An average intelligent man goes to temples and worships an idol as the image of God. But the wiseman's God is in his inner self.

Hinduism worked to bring together into one whole different kinds of believers in God. Many sects professing different beliefs live within the Hindu fold. The main note of Hinduism is one of respect for men of all other creeds. It was never the mission of the protagonists of Hinduism to convert humanity to one opinion, as the supreme importance was given to conduct and not belief. As S. Radhakrishnan wrote, "Hinduism requires every man to think steadily on life's mystery until he reaches the highest revelation." It hates compulsion of belief and faith, it insists on the development of one's intellectual conscience and sensibility to grasp the ultimate truth. This is the only reason that Hinduism has no common creed, and its worship no fixed form. It has bound together multitudinous sects and devotion into a common scheme.

Hinduism is a very practical religion. It sets before human beings the ideal of leading a full worldly life of values and preparation for the life hereafter. For this men are advised to regulate their whole life under the discipline of four stages — *brahmacharya, grahastha, vanprastha and sanyasa,* i.e. the stage of preparation through studies, the stage of worldly life, the stage of detachment with worldly interests and the final stage of renunciation of worldly actions and complete devotion to selfless service of mankind. Corresponding to these four stages, four values have been recognised such as *dharma, artha, kama* and *moksha.*

While dealing with Hinduism, it is necessary to dwell a little on the caste system or *varnavivastha.* The *Manu-smriti,* the oldest Hindu law book, shows that the *varna* scheme was already referred in the Rigveda. Society was regarded as an organism of which the various vocational groups formed different limbs. The *Manu-smriti* organises the whole human race into four types of human beings — the basic social components — men of knowledge, men of action, men of desire and men fit for only manual work. Originally the outcome of tolerance and trust, the caste system has now degenerated into an instrument of oppression and injustice. Hence it is justified if the system of caste is criticised today.

The origin of the caste system must be understood in order to explain it's implications. During the early stages of Indian history

there were many racial groups differing in colour *(varna* in Sanskrit means colour). These racial groups were in perpetual conflict with each other. In order to solve the problem of mutual conflict between people, Hinduism adopted a democratic method according to which the development of all racial groups was to proceed on the basis of their respective traits of character and qualities of action. Thus, very early in the history of Hinduism caste distinctions meant social stratification. It was an attempt to regulate and coordinate social activity. The *Purusa Sukta* has referred to the different sections of society as the different limbs of the same self. Each caste had its own social purpose and function, its own code and tradition. Each caste was supposed to contribute to the well-being of the whole society. The law which was to regulate social life was not the cruel law of competition but that of harmony and cooperation. There was no question of high and low, privileged and unprivileged classes in society. The basis of division was not birth but qualities and actions. The proof of this is that some of the most revered sages like Vyasa, Valmiki, Janak, Sanat Kumar were not *brahmins* by birth. Later on due to the dominance of *brahmins* the caste system was misinterpreted and became a source of inequality in society. The cry for social and economic equality is not unjustified in a democratic society. Each kind of work is equally important. Economically we have to contribute according to our capacity and enjoy equal rights in the eyes of law. When the caste system was introduced it was the question of character. A person could become a *brahmin* by his deeds and not merely by his family or birth. Even a chandala (man with low birth) was to be treated with respect if he had pure character.

Hinduism does not mean a mere religious belief. It is religion, culture and morality all blended together to reflect a way of thinking and an attitude to life. In Hinduism religion is more an action rather than a belief or faith. It insists on a spiritual and ethical outlook in life and asks people to manifest their religion through their deeds. The greatest emphasis is laid on purification of life. *Dharma* is right action. For observance of religious life, Hinduism prescribes rules of ethical discipline. As the first step, five observances *(niyamas)* have been prescribed. These are contentment, asceticism, study of scriptures, surrender of the lower self of desires of the higher self and to God. Everyone is required to cultivate a virtuous life. Five primary virtues *(yamas)* have been laid down to be cultivated by men. These are non-violence, truthfulness, non-stealing,

brahmacharya (discipline in sensual pleasure), non-acceptance of unnecessary gifts. Right from childhood a child is taught to respect his parents and the Guru *(Matradeva bhava, Pitaradeva bhava, Acharyadeva bhava).* Hindu ethics declare six eternal enemies about which Hindus are asked to be careful. These are lust, anger, greed, infatuation *(moha),* pride and envy. Corresponding to these vices, there are six virtues such as tranquillity, self-control, detachment, fortitude, faith and single-mindedness. Men are asked to remain away from the three basic sins such as lust *(kama),* anger *(krodha)* and pride *(ahankara)* because these become the source of other vices. All these show that the great sages who laid down the ethical basis of Hinduism were more concerned about life in this world rather than life hereafter. They wanted to make Hinduism a practical religion; a "religious attitude should justify itself rationally and ethically," (N.K. Devaraja, *Hinduism and Christianity*) and hence there is nothing irrational and fanatical in Hinduism. While religion refers to man's relation with God, ethics refers to man's relation with his fellow-men. Stressing upon a close relation between religion and ethics, non-violence or *ahimsa* has been referred to in the *Mahabharata* as the supreme *dharma (Ahimsa Parmo Dharma).*

There are two main tenets which characterise the philosophical basis of Hinduism. These are belief in the law of *karma* (action) and final emancipation or *moksha.* Belief in the doctrine of *karma* is common to all systems of Hinduism. *Karma* is the reason for embodiment of the soul and it is the basis of the world order *(sansara).* Once a man is born he must act. While action binds man to the world, it can also be made an instrument for liberation and perfection. Action performed with a sense of duty without any attachment to the idea of possible results leads to perfection. In the *Bhagvad Gita,* a full chapter is devoted to the type of action which suits human beings. Further, there are individual and social aspects of *karma* — the Ashrama system or the four stages of life refer to the individual aspect while the caste system refers to the social aspect. Pessimism and escapism have no place in Hinduism. Men are asked to act according to their essential nature *(svabhava)* and according to their position in life *(svadharma).* As a vigorous and active life has been prescribed for all men, the charge of escapism against Hinduism is wholly unjustified.

Belief in *moksha* or final emancipation is considered as the ultimate end and the highest goal of life for which men are to work

steadily. It implies freedom from the sufferings of the world, and freedom from the cycle of birth and death. The belief in the ideal of *moksha* is necessarily related to the concept of transmigration of the soul. *Moksha* is spiritual realisation or the fulfilment of the spirit in us. An emancipated man rises above all distinctions and enjoys perfect peace and bliss. The world or *sansara* is brought to an end when one attains *moksha* or liberation. It is realisation of the true nature of the self. As to the means of liberation Hinduism in general recommends not one but three paths of liberation — *karma* (action), *jnana* (knowledge), and *bhakti* (devotion). All men are not endowed with similar physical and mental abilities. There are men of strong will-power and determination, there are some with extraordinary intellectual capabilities, and there are men with strong sentiments and emotions with lesser will-power and intellect. Therefore, the three paths of action, knowledge and devotion are suggested to suit different types of men. A man who is honest and performs his actions with a sense of duty is described as a liberated soul. He is not affected by any loss or gain, pain or pleasure and remains steadfast. He enjoys perfect bliss. Similarly, a man with high intellectual ability is able to understand the difference between phenomenal and transcendental reality. He understands the essential identity between his self and the Absolute. He attains perfection or liberation in this world. Lastly, men with predominance of emotions can achieve liberation or *moksha* by devotion to God and complete surrender to Him. *Moksha* does not mean an end of this worldly life as it is interpreted sometime. It implies liberation in this life *(jivanmukti)* and liberation from the cycle of birth and death *(Videhamukti).* A liberated man performs actions in the spirit of service untouched by their consequences. Lord Buddha lived for more than forty years after achieving *irvana.* When such people die, they attain complete liberation and do not suffer the agony of rebirth.

With the spirit of democracy and immense faith in the freedom to choose one's ends and direct one's course in the effort to realise them, Hinduism offers a solution to the problem of conflict between religions. Every religion is good and each religion has cured its followers of the swell of passion, the thrust of desires and the blindness of temper. Looking at the religious developments in other parts of the world, we come across religious wars as the consequence of fanaticism, justifying extermination of people of different creeds. This was unknown in India. Persecution for non-belief was never

encouraged. Hinduism recognises that there are different approaches to God, and therefore, a rigid outlook cannot be considered correct. It accepts all forms of belief and tries to lift them to a higher level. Theological expressions of religious experience are bound to be varied. We move away from the essential religious path if we cannot understand the differences in religious approach. Swami Vivekananda, addressing the World Congress of Religions at Chicago, U.S.A. in 1893 took pains in explaining the universal approach of Hinduism. What is reflected as dogmas, ritualism and ceremonialism is only the outer face of Hinduism and not its necessary characteristic. For Hindus, universal brotherhood, non-violence, love for all living beings and belief in one absolute reality are the basic features of religion. Whatever is taught by the great teachers of Hinduism was not meant for only Hindus but for all mankind. Hinduism believes that universal consciousness is present everywhere and, therefore, all earth is sacred, all souls are identical. Due to *sanatan* (universal) character of Hinduism the impact of Indian spirituality has been beneficial to mankind in general. Spirituality and logic coincided in Hinduism unlike any other religion. Indian religion, culture and philosophy offer a solution to the problems faced by mankind today. Ignorance or *ajnana* is regarded as the root cause of all conflicts and evil, hence, Hinduism emphasised the importance of right knowledge *(Tamaso Maa Jyotirgamaya)* for overcoming human problems. It offers the hope and possibility of a better world.

Jainism

Religion originally came in as a measure to keep peace on earth, promote goodwill amongst mankind and inspire hope of a higher life in the individual. It is with this specific view that Jainism should be understood. As one of the three major religions of India, the other two being Hinduism and Buddhism, Jainism has inspired people to promote the ideals of equality, purity and non-violence. Religious toleration, fellowship and coexistence is the essence of Jain religion and philosophy. Free from formalism and ceremonialism, Jainism grew as a strong reaction against the cult of sacrifice to propitiate gods and against the distinctions of caste and creed. In its general philosophy as well as ethics, Jainism has close affinities with Hinduism and Buddhism and other religions as it preached the ideal of salvation of mankind. The Jainas believe their system to be eternal truth revealed by their *Tirthankaras* (victors) for the benefit of mankind. Preaching the ideal of universal brotherhood, Jainism opens its portals to all, irrespective of geographical or racial boundaries. The essential criterion of Jainism has been its absolute toleration and non-persecution. The Jains never forced their religion upon others; they only opened the treasures of their religion before the masses, and those who were convinced of its merits, accepted it. After Mahavira, Jainism got royal patronage in many parts of India, but it never took advantage of its patrons to persecute the followers of other religions. The Jains believe their religion to be very old and count twenty-four Tirthankaras or expounders of *dharma*, of which Aadinatha or Rishabhadeva was the first and Mahavira was the last. Mahavira and his predecessor Parsvanatha lived between 817 B.C. and 527 B.C. Parsvanatha lived for 100 years and Mahavira for 72 years. In the Jain literary tradition the twenty-second Tirthankara Arishtanemi has been described as a cousin of Krishna Vasudeva and belonged to the Yadava clan of Dwarka. Even his historical background is established on the basis of parentage and family but nothing is definitely said about his birth and years of life. About the other Tirthankaras nothing can be said with certainty except their names as given in the Jain scriptures.

According to the Jainas, their religion is eternal and its truths have been revealed by the Tirthankaras. In some Hindu classics there are references to the Jainas. In the *Vishnu Purana*, the *Mahabharata* and *Manu-smriti*, we come across references to the first Tirthankara Rashabha. However, an authentic record of the teachings of Tirthankaras before Parsvanatha is not available. Therefore, Parsvanatha is taken as the most important figure and the real founder of Jain religion. Parsvanatha belonged to the princely family of Benaras. But at the age of thirty he took to the life of an ascetic. After attaining enlightenment he preached the ideals of love and brotherhood for seventy years. Upon his followers he enjoined four vows : (i) not to injure life; (ii) to speak the truth; (iii) not to steal; and (iv) not to own property. The historicity of Parsvanatha is a proof that Jainism as a religious movement had flourished before Mahavira.

Vardhamana Mahavira, the last and the twenty-fourth Tirthankara of Jainism, is acknowledged as the greatest of Jain philosophers and the most important exponent of Jain religion. As a great preacher and extraordinary genius Mahavira organised the Jain Sangha so that Jainism could continue as a strong religious stream in India along with Hinduism. Born at Vaisali (Basarh) in Bihar, Mahavira belonged to a

royal family. On the death of his parents when he was thirty years old, Mahavira took to ascetic life and for twelve years endured hardships and sufferings to achieve enlightenment. After that he spent thirty years in preaching the Jain religious system and in organising the order of Jain ascetics. Before his death in 527 B.C. at Patna, Mahavira left a profound religious legacy to be carried further by his followers in the years to come. Many scholars are of the opinion that Mahavira was one of the reformers of Jainism who revitalised and reinterpreted the moral principles laid down by the Jain Tirthankaras. It is now accepted by all that he was not founder of the new sect but only continued with sincerity and devotion the tradition he inherited through the succession of Jain Tirthankaras.

As for the scriptural and literary source of Jainism, it may be said that the discourses delivered by Mahavira are an extremely significant source of Jainism and reflect the Jain tradition in all its important aspects. But Jainism is accepted to be much older than Mahavira and therefore the source-books of the Jainas are said to be much more than what Mahavira preached. Generally these are classified under seven different heads: the *purvas;* the *angas; upangas, prakirnas; cheda-sutras; mula-sutras; nandi-sutra* and *Anuyogadvara-sutras* — the two solitary texts. The *purvas* constitute the oldest part of the Jain canons and are accepted by scholars to have been taught by Mahavira himself. However, the *anga* literature constitutes the oldest source material on Jainism. The *upangas* correspond to *angas* and consist of discussions on the different aspects of nature and man. In *prakirnas* many subjects are treated in a scattered form. *Cheda-sutras* deal with the conduct of the monks and nuns of Jain order. *Mula-sutra* are the original texts and denote the recorded works of Mahavira. The last two *sutras* contain information about source books and mode of interpreting the sacred texts.

There are two sects in Jainism known as Svetambaras (white clad) and Digambaras (sky clad or nude). So far as the basic religious teachings and philosophy are concerned, there is no difference between the two. However, the Svetambaras usually claim to be liberal among the Jainas while the Digambaras are known for their rigid and extreme approach. Being devoid of any distinguishing characteristic, the latter proclaim themselves to belong to whole humanity and not to any particular community. Digambaras stretched the vow of non-possession to the most extreme level in abandoning even the minimum clothes to cover their body. This sect was very prominent at the

time of Alexander's invasion of India and were known as naked philosophers.

An important difference between the Svetambaras and Digambaras is that the latter have been against admitting women into the Jain Sangha, while the former have been liberal in their approach and admit women into the order. Even about Mahavira the two sects have different versions. The Svetambaras believe that Mahavira was very philosophical from the early childhood yet did not renounce the world for the sake of his parents. He is even said to have married princess Yashoda. The Digambaras believe that Mahavira left worldly life all of a sudden and did not marry at all. Lastly, in regard to possession, conduct, interpretation of Jain source books, the two sects differ, the Digambaras being very rigid and severly ascetic.

In different parts of the world different religious systems have grown at different times. All religions contain the same truths and the same moral teachings. Whatever differences are noticed in detail are due to emphasis on some particular aspect of truth. Jainism has tried to develop a sense of understanding between seemingly conflicting systems of religion through its theory of *syadavada* or *anekantavada.* The theory draws attention to the fact that the apparent differences in statements about truth only imply that there may be different points of view resulting from perceiving the different aspects of truth. While none of the points of view states the whole truth, each one states some particular aspect of it, so no statement can be branded as incorrect or wrong. This applies to religions as well. All religions are true. We should try to understand the viewpoints of all religions in order to grasp the nature of reality. Every difference in religious and philosophical ideas, in all opinions and beliefs may be understood to furnish a welcome step towards the knowledge of the real truth. It is only due to ignorance that a person believes, his religion as superior to other religions. All religions should be studied and the differences in principles will automatically vanish. This is the best means of promoting common understanding and goodwill among the followers of different faiths. On the basis of their theory of *syadavada*, Jainism tried to promote religious toleration, fellowship and co-existence among the people of the world.

Religion is necessarily associated with the idea of God but Jainism is known to be atheistic as the Jainas do not believe in the existence of as God as creator or personal God. However they believe in the existence of the soul. Thus, atheism in the case of Jainism is without

denying the existence of the soul and without presupposing a personal God. Jainism makes each individual responsible for his own fate and maintains that ethical living alone can ensure lasting peace and happiness. The term 'God' is used by Jainism to denote a higher state of existence of the *Jiva* or the conscious principle. Explaining the Jaina point of view, Jacobi wrote, "Though the Jainas are undoubtedly atheistical, as we understand the term, still they would probably object to being styled atheists. While admitting that the world is without beginning or end, and therefore not produced by a god, or ruled by one, they recognise a highest deity *(paramadevata)* as the object of veneration, the Jiva, the teacher of the sacred Law, who being absolutely free from all passions and delusions, and being possessed of omniscience, has reached absolute perfection after having annihilated all his *karma*."* The Jainas worship the Jiva rather than the gods and offer worship in temples but without expectation that their prayers would be answered. Behind all the ceremonial worship in temples and erection of statues for the *Jivas*, there is a strong conviction that the best mode of worship is to practise the Jiva's discipline. The ultimate ideal of religion can be achieved by suppressing natural desires and practising of strict ascetic discipline. But this is not possible for an ordinary person. So religious feelings of a Jain centres around the founders of religion (Tirthankaras). This gave rise to the worship of the *Jivas* in Jainism.

In Jain religion and philosophy, there is no glorification of *karma* or actions performed by men and we come across a materialistic interpretation. *Karma* is natural and is responsible for all human experiences. *Karma* consists of ignorance and the passions of attachment and hatred. It is caused due to absence of true recognition of the difference between the self and the not-self. Under the evil influence of *karma*, the soul which is pure and unlimited feels limited. *Karma* is material and keeps the soul in bondage. It is therefore, an obstacle in the way of final liberation. The binding of *Jiva* takes place through two types of *karmas* — the physical and the psychical. The first signifies influx of matter into the soul and the second is manifested in various conscious activities. But according to the Jainas, only man is responsible for all *karmas* and hence he is responsible for his fate. According to Jainism, all *karmas* are material in nature and are the natural causes of human experiences. Being a dualistic system, Jainism believes in *Jiva* and *Ajiva*, i.e. the non-material and the material principles. Experiences are the result of mixing up of the two principles — the material principle of *karma* and the non-material *Jiva*. *Karma* imposes limitations on the purity of consciousness which is the intrinsic nature of *Jiva*. Hence, the *Jiva* has to be freed from *karma* for the sake of *nirvana*.

* Encyclopaedia of *Religion and Ethics*, Vol. II. p. 187.

The *summum bonum* of the Jain religion is the attainment of salvation or*nirvana* — freedom from an endless cycle of births and deaths. This freedom is possible if one makes a constant effort. The path leading to salvation consists of right faith, right knowledge and right conduct. The soul is inherently perfect and pure and is capable of overcoming all obstacles. Only it must subject itself to a series of practical disciplines and rules of conduct. The Jain Tirthankaras are the shining example to humanity, assuring us that spiritual perfection is attainable and is not merely an imaginary concept. The liberated souls are those who have perfected themselves. Liberation implies freedom of the *Jiva* from the *Ajiva*. Jainism is totally against offering devotion to any being, human or divine in the hope of gaining perfection through the mercy of that being. One has to struggle with one's own enemies, having faith in one's own strength. The true victor is expected to defeat his passions and sensual cravings. He who conquers himself obtains happiness and consequently *moksa*. The liberated souls take the place of God. It is the human soul which, on complete purification from external *karmic* matter, attains the highest level of divine perfection and, thus, man himself becomes God. The Jain philosophers have analysed the stages through which spiritual perfection can be attained. Fourteen such stages have been referred through which purity of the soul is experienced and these are called *gunasthanas* — states of virtue.

The ethical aspect of religion occupies the most important place in Jainism. It does not endorse any religious act which is not ethically valid. Mahavira prescribed five ethical principles to his followers: *ahimsa* (non-violence), *satya* (truth), *asteya* (non-stealing), *brahmacarya* (celibacy), and *aparigraha* (non-possession). Out of the five principles, non-violence is the most important. Jainism does not endorse any religious act which does not promote the cause of non-violence. All religious rites of the Jainas were formulated round the principle of non-violence. Stress on the principles of non-violence was simply to express strong reaction against the cult of animal sacrifice in Hinduism to propitiate gods. Every religion recognises the

sanctity of human life; Jainism wants the same feeling to be extended to the other forms of life. All religions advocate non-violence but Jainism believes in acting upon it and carrying it out physically and mentally. The strict adherence of non-violence is made to regulate daily conduct of all Jainas. The Jaina monks are often seen moving about with covered face and sometime sweeping the ground while walking. This is because they do not want to injure even the tiny forms of life like germs and insects in the act of breathing or walking respectively. Some western critics have criticised carrying the observance of non-violence to these preposterous extremes. However, the Jainas emphasise that we should desist from killing or injuring a living being and even the intention of harming others has to be abandoned. The principle of non-violence is particularly significant because it generates an attitude of equality, tolerance, respect for life and universal brotherhood. Violence is evil in itself and breeds other evil. Hence, it has to be avoided in all its aspects.

Jainism is a religion of varied and multifarious activities. The special feature of Jainism is its claim to universal brotherhood. It opens its doors to all, regardless of caste, creed and sex. Its main object is to lead all men to salvation. In ancient times, when Jainism was made a state religion under the patronage of kings, it never manifested hostility to other religions. Jainism produced great religious leaders who worked for the removal of ignorance and superstition. Jainism has been a religion of peace and equality.

Buddhism

Buddhism is one of the greatest living religions of the world. For fifteen centuries it has been a living faith in India and is mingled with the common cultural and social current of the country. Under the impact of historical developments, it receded to the remote northern parts of the country. A religion is an organisation of spiritual aspirations which rejects the sensory world and negates the impulses which bind us to it. Buddhism is a true religion according to this standard. It offers many points of attraction to a person who is thoroughly disillusioned with the contemporary world situation. Buddhism gives a clear and complete account of the methods of salvation.

Buddhism arose as a great humanist force affecting the religious and moral ideas of its time and contributed to the process of transforming the existing social conditions. It is a religion of kindness, compassion and equality. Buddhism arose twenty-five hundred years

ago, out of the background of the religious and social conditions in which ritualism and the cult of animal sacrifice dominated religion and the caste system dominated social life. Buddhism set its face against the cult of sacrifice and denounced social distinctions on the basis of birth. Advocating equality in social status on the basis of action, Buddhism threw open the doors of organised religious life to all men and women.

Buddhism centres round the teachings of Gautama Buddha who is acknowledged as the founder of this religion. In the words of Prof. P. Benerjee, he was "one of the greatest thinkers and reformers that the world has ever known." Born in the year 623 B.C., the Buddha was the son of the Sakya king Suddhodana and queen Mahamaya. Love of solitude and spiritual inclinations were the characteristic traits of Buddha as a child. His encounter with an old man, a diseased person, a dead body and an upright ascetic walking majestically was a turning point in his otherwise luxurious life. He made up his mind to renounce the royal comforts in order to discover the truth. Consequently, in his twenty-ninth year the Buddha left his home with a quiet farewell to his wife Yashodhara and the new born son Rahula, and adopted the life of an ascetic. He spent six years as an ascetic and suffered great austerities without achieving anything. The Buddha realised that physical torture was not the way to achieve real knowledge. Then he sat down under the Bodhi tree with a firm determination of not leaving the seat till complete enlightenment was achieved. Four weeks in contemplation led Gautama to discover the Law of Causation. After achieving enlightenment, he was raised to the status of the Buddha. He realised the highest truth that marked the beginning of an extremely influential religious movement. For the rest of his forty-five years, the Buddha worked tirelessly for human emancipation preaching his doctrine and establishing the holy order. His profound wisdom, renunciation, compassion, selfless service combined with his magnetic personality and method of teaching had a great effect on people. His message spread to the whole of north India. All people sought refuge in his order, regardless of caste, creed and status.

Sixth century B.C. was the age of religious crisis and spiritual unrest. The Buddha revolted against the existing Brahmanical religious practices which were not beneficial to man. The story of Buddha's life and teachings according to the older Pali Texts placed more emphasis on his humanity than on his divinity. His teachings may

be described very briefly as abstention from evil; accumulation of whatever is good and noble; and the purification of mind. In the words of Prof. C.V. Joshi, "the Buddha's religion is not a dogmatic and elaborate system of rites, rules or prayers but a way of life, of purity of thinking, speaking and acting. The Buddha was the first rationalist of the world who asserted that one was one's own saviour and master without reference to any outside power." According to the Buddhist philosophy, man consists of five heaps technically known as *skandhas* — the body, feelings, perceptions, impulses and emotions. When the individual is taken out from these five heaps he ceases to exist; the result is then *nirvana* — the goal of Buddhism. The Buddha's teaching, therefore, is exclusively concerned with showing the way to salvation. In its origin and intention, the doctrine of salvation characterised Buddhism as an extremely practical religion. Speculation on matters irrelevant to salvation has been always discouraged. Suffering is the basic fact of life. If a man is struck by an arrow, he would be more concerned about extricating it than about knowing who shot it. The Buddha's last injunction to the disciples was: 'all conditioned things are impermanent. Work out your salvation with deligence.'

On careful study we discover two sides of the Buddha's life — individual and social. The first side reflects Buddha as a man fully absorbed in meditation and withdrawn from the ordinary worldly life. He does not appear to be a saviour but only a teacher. The earlier form of Buddhism and Ashoka's missionaries highlighted the individual side giving it greater importance. The second side of Buddha's life was concerned with human suffering and reflects his eagerness to spread the message of truth based on compassion for humanity. The Buddha preached the ideal of salvation for all and universal service with discipline and devotion. The Buddha did not feel that he was announcing a new religion. He was born and brought up as a Hindu. He only tried to restate the ancient ideals of the Indo-Aryan civilisation with a new emphasis. He aimed at a spiritual experience in which all selfish cravings, fear and passion are extinct and one is led tc spiritual freedom. The Buddha ridiculed the attitude of abstaining from action with the faith that God would do everything. He revolted against the popular religion of dogma and intolerance based on ignorance. He was of the view that doctrinal orthodoxy has only filled the world with injustice, misery, strife, crime and hatred. In a true religion there is no place for all these. Thus we have to keep in mind

that Buddhism started as an offshoot of the more ancient faith of the Hindus and not as an independent religion. The main emphasis of the Buddha was on the reformation of existing religious practices and return to the basic principles. This is certified by the fact that the *Puranas* have described the Buddha as the ninth *avatara* (incarnation) of Lord Vishnu to support the concept of the supreme personality taking birth for the good of mankind. The Buddha was an outstanding representative of our religious tradition and Buddhism continues to be an integral part of our culture.

A few weeks after the death of Buddha, the elders of the order felt the necessity of collecting his teachings with the view of safeguarding their purity and for preventing arbitrary interpretation of the actual teachings of the Master. Consequently, the First Buddhist Council was held at Rajgriha and attended by 500 monks including Ananda, Mahakasyapa and Rahula (son of Buddha). The Maghada king Ajatshatru bore the expenses of the council. The council tried to systematise the Buddhist creed. Due to controversy between the orthodox and unorthodox groups of monks, the Second Buddhist Council was held at Vaisali 100 years after the Buddha's death. The orthodox group protested against the liberty taken by some monks and condemned the tendency of deviating from the strict discipline of the Master. Thus, the progressive group broke off from the orthodox group and established a separate sect called Mahasanghika. The need for purifying the religious doctrine of Buddhism was again felt after 236 years of the Buddha's death. Thus, a Third Council met at Pataliputra under the patronage of King Ashoka in which the orthodox sect alone was accepted as the true representative of the original teachings of the Buddha. The *Tripitaka*, the important Buddhist scriptures, were compiled and missionaries were despatched to different countries to propagate Buddhism. In spite of the attempts to integrate the Buddhist Sangha through the three councils, new sects of Buddhism kept on developing and there were 18 sects at the time of Ashoka. The most notable sects were Sthaviravada, Saravastivada and Mahasanghika. The Sthaviravada represented the tenets of early Buddhism and faithfully adhered to the original teachings of the Buddha. Its literature is confined to the *Tripitaka*.

During the 2500 years of its history, Buddhism underwent many phases. But the main trends of development were represented by the two prominent schools of Hinayana and Mahayana. Hinayana refers to the persons of average intellect who are capable of perfection only

by listening to and practising the *dharma* or religion that was propagated by the Buddha. It represented the earliest phase of orthodox Buddhism which developed from the time of Buddha to the rule of king Ashoka. Mahayana is meant for people of higher intellect who achieve their own salvation without anybody's help. Mahayana school emerged in 100 A.D. as propounded by Asvaghosa and was systematised by Nagarjuna in 200 A.D. It claimed to unfold the higher aspects of the Buddha's teachings emphasising two levels of truth: ultimate and empirical. The Buddha is said to have been born only in an empirical sense. While Hinayana school lays more emphasis on the four truths propounded by Buddha, the Mahayanists emphasised the higher aspects of his teachings. Hinayana and Mahayana schools represented several sects of Buddhism, the main being the sarvastivada, the sthaviravada under Hinayana, and the Madhyamikas with the Yogachara under the Mahayana school.

The oldest Buddhist literature are the *Tripitaka* (three baskets), a collection of speeches, sayings, songs, narratives and rules of the Sangha which were compiled as the most important scriptures of Buddhism. These are divided into the *vtnayapitaka,* the *suttapitaka* and the *Abhidhammapitaka* with their further division into several parts. The above texts comprise the Pali literature of Buddhism. The non-Pali literature of Buddhism consists of commentaries on the Pali *Tripitaka,* Jataka tales, biographies and other legends associated with the life of Buddha.

After achieving enlightenment the Buddha delivered his first sermon to his five companions at Sarnath near Varanasi. This sermon was later known as *dharma-chakra pravartna.* It embodied the four noble truths. The Buddha declared that life in the world involved constant suffering and misery. This is the first noble truth. The second noble truth referred to the origin of all sufferings; the Buddha said that cravings are the root of human misery and the cause of all sufferings. The third truth is that sufferings can be ended by conquering our cravings. And finally in the fourth noble truth, the Buddha laid down detailed steps to be taken to seek permanent relief from the life of suffering. These steps constitute the Eight-fold Path which includes right views, right intention, right speech, right conduct, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration. The four noble truths constitute the essence of the ethical philosophy of Buddhism.

Buddhism is usually described as an atheistic school along with

Jainism and Charavakas. Some people go to the extent of saying that since Buddhism does not uphold the existence of God, it cannot be called a religion. But this is a misinterpretation of Buddhism. As a matter of fact the Buddha refused to be drawn into any metaphysical discussion regarding the existence of supernatural reality and the first cause of things. He was mainly concerned with the problem of human suffering and the ways of achieving salvation. Buddhism is primarily an ethical rather than a metaphysical system. Speculations concerning God or the origin of the universe were held as a waste of time. Without openly denying personal God, Buddhism expresses an attitude of indifference to the creator of the universe and, in this sense, it can be branded as atheistic. However, it must be kept in mind that the Buddha never affirmed nor denied the existence of God. He merely preserved an attitude of 'golden silence' on metaphysical questions. It may be pointed out that the Mahayana school of Buddhism conceived three forms of the Buddha; the Dharma-kaya; the Sambhoga-kaya and the Rupa-kaya, symbolising all pervasive reality. The deification of the Buddha naturally introduced the element of worship and devotion in the Mahayana school. The Buddha is looked upon as a Saviour God by them.

The specific contribution of Buddhism to religious thought lies in its insistence on the doctrine of not-self *(anatmanvada).* The belief in a 'self' is considered by Buddhists as the basic factor leading to the emergence of suffering. The Buddha said, "In so many ways, Ananda, there is a refraining from declarations concerning the soul" *(Dialogues of the Buddha* Part II p. 63). The Buddha refrained from affirming or denying the soul in order to avoid siding either with the eternalists or the annihilists. There is more emphasis on the mode of living, on the saintliness of life and conquering attachment to this world. However, the Buddhists believe in the concept of rebirth and regard it reasonable and sensible for us to strive for immortality. The aim of Buddhism like that of many other religions is to gain immortality, a deathless life. The Buddha, after he had become enlightened, claimed to have opened up the doors to the undying.

Karma (action) is accepted as an article of faith by all the main systems of religion and philosophy of India. In Buddhism *karma* has been interpreted in a unique sense and is given great importance. Talking to king Malinda, the Buddha expressed the view that "every living being has *karma* as its master, its inheritance, its congenital cause, its kinsman, its refuge. It is *karma* that differentiates all being

into law and high states." For Buddhism *karma* is of four kinds:

1. *Karma* which produces results in this life;
2. *Karma* which produces results in the next life;
3. *Karma* which produces result from time to time;
4. Past *karma*.

In Buddhist scriptures some other classifications of *karma* are also given. But the sum and substance of Buddhist theory of *karma* lies in the belief that by *karma* one attains glory and praise, and by *karma* also comes bondage, ruin and suffering. The world exists through *karma* and people live through it. In the Buddhist explanation of *karma*, the emphasis is placed on the state of mind. *Karma* in Buddhism is defined as volition or *chetana*. It is consciousness of good and bad. The Buddha said, "I declare, monks volition to be action." A person cannot be held morally or legally responsible for any action of his, if it is not intentional.

In Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism, we find equal emphasis on the necessity of salvation, *moksha* or deliverance from the worldly life of suffering. In Buddhism the term *nirvana* is used for salvation and it is regarded as the *summum bonum* of religion. In essence Buddhism is a proclamation of the truth of *nirvana*, a search for *nirvana* and a sure path leading to *nirvana*. It is described as the free state of consciousness, the highest state of spirituality and blessedness. *Nirvana* is interpreted in Buddhism as annihilation of passion, hatred and delusion. *Nirvana* implies removal of all evils like greed, ill-will and dullness and complete freedom from these. In its positive aspect, it means mental illumination conceived as light, insight, state of happiness, contentment, peace and self-mastery. *Nirvana* means truth, the highest good and communion with the best.

In Buddhism *nirvana*, as the ultimate ideal, requires constant spiritual exercise and contemplation. Before soaring into heights of spiritual perfection one has to cultivate universal love, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity. Since *nirvana* means end of all sufferings it can be attained only through meditation, wisdom, observance of precepts and steadfastness. State of *nirvana* implies absence of passion, destruction of pride, avoidance of thirst, freedom from attachment and destruction of all sensual pleasures. It is freedom from all sins and final release from lower nature. The sure way to *nirvana* or salvation lies in the noble eight-fold path as propounded by the Buddha. In the Dhammapada *nirvana* is referred to as immortality

and opposite of death. It is the highest condition and state of the greatest happiness. *Nirvana* is a vision, an experience, a feeling and self-state. In its literal sense *nirvana* means extinction. As to what happens to a perfect man *(Tathagat)* after death the Buddha remained silent when asked. He only said, it was very inconvenient to describe that state when the fire of life was extinguished.

We may now sum up the essentials of Buddhism as religion. In any Buddhist monastery the echoes of a prayer are heard: *Buddham Sharanam Gachchami, Sangham Sharanam Gachchami, Dharammam Sharanam Gachchami* (I take the shelter of Lord Buddha, I take the shelter of Sangh or Order, I take the shalter of Dhamma or Dharma). This prayer also speaks the core and the essentials of Buddhist religion. The Buddha is looked upon as the real embodiment of human perfection and a completely free man. Not only this, he is also accepted as the saviour of mankind. Faithful adherence to the path shown by him is sure to lead to *nirvana*. There is special importance of Sangha or Buddhist Order in Buddhism. Buddhist Sangha refers to the brotherhood of monks who take upon themselves to observe strict discipline in life and live as an organisation for a definite purpose. The Buddha had no intention of imposing specific set of regulations upon his followers and in one of his dialogues with Ananda he said. "O Ananda, be ye lamps unto yourselves. Be ye a refuge to yourselves" (*Dialogues of the Buddha*, Part II pp. 107, 108). The monks in the Buddhist Sangha are supposed to be examples of good life and are expected to propagate the teachings of the Master as their religious duty.

Dhamma is interpreted to mean the first statement made by the Buddha in explaining his principles and then all the subsequent statements without exception. Later on Dhamma came to mean whatever was recorded in the *Tripitakas*. The Buddha recommended right conduct for both a medicant and a householder without prescribing strict code of conduct. The Buddha asked monks and laymen to cultivate virtuous life and develop right attitude towards the matters of day-to-day living. Greatest emphasis in Buddhism is laid on the principle of non-violence. Non-violence was accepted as the Buddhist doctrine simply as a reaction against increase in violence which marked relationship. As a part of religious injunction it is said, let him who desires his own happiness not harm others. This attitude of Buddhism had immense humanising effect on the entire history of Asia. King Ashoka won his empire by violence but under the effect of Buddhist

doctrine was converted to its faith. As for the problems of attitude to vegetarianism and religious persecution there is no ambiguity in Buddhism. A Buddhist should be a vegetarian since it is impossible to eat animals without harming them. But if a monk who goes about begging for food gets only meat he should eat it. A monk cannot have a choice in food as he has no attachment with food. Monastic discipline does not permit to pick and choose for eating. So as a compromise and a middle path, the Buddhists who take their religion seriously should avoid eating meat unless the practical situation forces them to do so. In this sense Buddhism is realistic and practical as compared to Jainism. As for the second problem of religious persecution there is no permission for that. One must be free to adopt reli-gion of his choice.

Buddhism is the first religion which evolved in India and crossed over its boundaries by virtue of its inherent vitality. It still preserves its position as one of greatest religions of the world due to its manifest attitude of love for all men. Originally Buddhism as it was preached by the Buddha was not meant to be a full-fledged religion. Buddha claimed to have discovered a path to salvation from the necessary miserable existence in the world. But it developed into a religious order due to a definite organisation or Sangha and an elaborate system of rules and disciplines. However the strength of Buddhism lay in its persuasive ethics, its fascination for holy life dedicated to the service of humanity.

Christianity

The religion originally preached by Jesus Christ is known as Christianity. It stands in a historical continuity with Judaism and accepts the monotheism of the Hebrew prophets. It is essentially an ethical and a natural religion. A religion becomes natural when prayers and offerings are made to the spirit for benefit. When the gods are conceived as capable of forgiving man's sins, the religion is considered as ethical. A crucial feature of Christianity is the expectation of God's grace. Although there is little about God in the *New Testament*, yet Christianity should be viewed as a theistic religion as there is an elaborate account of the relationship between man and God through the mediation of the person and work of Jesus Christ.

The original teachings of Christianity set before mankind the ideal of life based simply on the love of God and man. In Christian love mankind came to be recognised as one family in which the needs of one became the concern of all. The orthodox Christians taught that evil should be returned with good. The aim of Christianity is to live by the law of love. Seek things by honest labour and participate in the worldly life so long as it does not interfere with the necessary Christian duties. Work is duty. If a man will not work he shall not eat.

Christianity is a religion centred round the person and work of Christ, and in its present form arose from the faith that in Jesus Christ, God was manifest in flesh and blood and lived among men. The concept of incarnation is found in some other religions as well but in Christianity it assumed the central place. The doctrines set forth in Christianity follow from the belief that Jesus portrayed the character of God.

Jesus Christ was a Jew both by birth and faith. By his disciples, his ancestry is traced to the royal family of David and his birth is ascribed by the Christian church to a miraculous act of God. At the age of thirty, Jesus appeared in public and after a short period (possibly 18 months) he was crucified upon the accusation of his countrymen by the Roman authorities. The career of Jesus is properly understood in the light of his relation with Judaism, the Hebrew religion. Hebrew religious teachers were God-conscious people. Their religion was primarily and essentially theocratic. They thought of God as a king enthroned in heaven, ruling the world. Jesus freed the traditional religion from all parochial elements and sounded a note of universality in religious belief. He set forth communion with God as the most certain fact of human experience and as a simple reality. The Christians view Jesus as the most lovable personality and he is painted as extraordinary in humility, simplicity, benevolence and forgiveness. Ignoring the intricacies of ritualism and theology of the traditional religion, Jesus set forth the idea of God which appealed to common men. His teachings may be summed up as the supreme love of God and love of fellowmen. The Christian religion, as dependent on the teachings of Christ, is through and through ethical as God's inner nature finds expression in forgiveness, mercy, righteousness and truth. It is not a transcendental religion but centres round the daily conduct of man.

Christ is seen as the liberator of mankind and the mediator between God and man. And this concept of Christ as mediator and redeemer is really the core of the Christian religion. The most important fact about Christ is his divinity, since the Christian God manifests

Himself as Christ, and as spirit. It was much later in the nineteenth century that the liberal theologians interpreted Christ as an ideal man setting ethical standards for human beings and a great religious leader. But the concept of divinity incarnate in Christ continued to be accepted by the orthodox Christians. For them no ordinary man could assume the role of a mediator. That role could be assumed only by a sinless person who combined within him both divinity and humanity. In the words of William Barclay, "The Jesus is the perfect priest. The perfect priest must be at one and the same time fully divine and fully human." This is the reason that in the *New Testament* the incarnate Lord Jesus is shown as both human and divine. Jesus has been described as Man, Son of God and a prophet only to manifest the divinity in him. He is also described as 'the Chosen', 'the Beloved' and so on. Jesus underwent suffering and death. He suffered for the sins of humanity and sacrificed himself so that humanity might be saved. His suffering was real as humanity in the Lord was real. According to the Christian faith, to be saved one should have faith in the mediator and should follow the path shown by him. Christian thought was generally concentrated on man's redemption by the sacrifice of Jesus. As the supreme example of humanity, benevolence and forgiveness Jesus taught how a man is to conduct himself in his individual and social life. He explained what it means to be a religious person. There are several stories recorded in the Christian scriptures in which Christ is shown as both divine and human. In one such story, a woman was brought to him with the charge of adultery. According to the Commandments of Moses, she was to be stoned to death. Jesus ignored the suggestion of people who brought the woman and said, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." On hearing this everyone present there left quietly. In the Bible, Jesus is depicted as even more forgiving than God.

The most sacred book of Christians is the *Bible*. It consists of twenty-seven books divided into the two testaments — the *Old Testament* and the *New Testament*. The *Old Testament* is the sacred book of the Jews while the specific Christian teachings are contained in the *New Testament*. Jesus refined the ethical and religious parts of the teachings in the *Old Testament* and thus his teachings as compared with the earlier prophets mark considerable spiritual progress. The statements in the *New Testament* like: "I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you," "Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth. That thine

alms may be in secret", clearly manifest the emphasis by Jesus on ethical and spiritual principles.

The Christian doctrine as it is elaborated in the *New Testament* may be broadly divided in three parts: (a) belief in God as the Creator of the Universe, and also belief in Jesus as the Son of God and Son of man; (b) stress on the necessity of faith in God and in Jesus as His son along with obeying the Commandments which enjoin both love of God and love of man: (c) The belief in Original Sin of man and the possibility of salvation through the grace of God and absolute faith in Christ.

In the *Old Testament,* the dominant figure is God as creator of the universe. God is taken as a spirit and shown as omnipotent, (all-powerful), Omnipresent (present everywhere) and Omniscient (all-knowing). The *Old Testament* signifies God's efforts through the prophets who voiced His message to the people at large. The *New Testament* is mainly concerned with Jesus and his activities. It witnesses the Incarnate Lord (Jesus) as both human and divine. Jesus has been variously described as Messiah and prophet. He is said to have performed the role of prophet and the role of mediator as the high priest. His unique position as the 'Son of God' is stressed in the *New Testament.* That is why Jesus speaks with authority unlike prophets of the *Old Testament,* 'I say unto you', 'My father is Heaven'. But in the *New Testament* it is also said " the Christ gave his life as a ransom for many and all", "The blood of Jesus His Son cleanseth us from all sin." Further it is written, "God commendeth His love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." Thus, in the *New Testament* the main emphasis is on Christ and his work for the salvation of mankind.

Coming to the main features of Christianity as religion, it may be said that Christianity is a universal religion. Before Christ, the religion of the Jews (the Hebrew religion) was characterised by nationalism. Christ introduced the element of universality after modifying and refining the traditional religious belief. The founder of Christianity is accepted as the mediator between God and man as He suffered an early and painful death to redeem mankind of it's sins. The moral teachings of Christianity appeal to all men regardless of racial and geographical limitations.

Christianity is a monotheistic religion. Its monotheistic character is an important reason for its universality. Monotheism implies faith in the existence of one God who manifests Himself through the

character of Christ. The concept of revelation gives Christian monotheism a wider appeal. Under monotheistic faith, Christians believe in three things: Fatherhood of God, Divine dignity of Christ and religious experience of Christians. Christians have faith in God as Father, Son and Spirit. There is also belief that God acts in many ways for the good of man and ordinary people cannot always understand the ways in which God works. Nothing happens without the will of God.

Christianity is fundamentally concerned with man's redemption. Redemption cannot be accepted as the sole motive of religion, yet no religion can satisfy man unless it offers him redemption. The concept of redemption presupposes the basic dogma of Christianity that mankind inherits the sin committed by the first parents. Everybody that has come into the world has already been contaminated by the Original Sin. The Original Sin resulted in estrangement between God and man. It is believed that Jesus Christ in the role of prophet and mediator tried to bring an end to this estrangement and voiced the message of God with authority. In the later books of the *New Testament*, there is a notion of Christ atoning for the sins of mankind by sacrificing his life. The concept of salvation which is accepted by all religions is equivalent to redemption in a negative sense, though positively it implies man's reconciliation with God. In the *Old Testament*, God is described as redeemer of all men. In the *New Testament*, Christ is shown to have sacrificed himself to redeem his followers of sin. In the tradition of the Roman Church, the Pope is accepted as the centre of a divine-human organisation. It is believed that Christ, while returning to heaven, committed his authority to the apostles, especially St. Peter. Later, this authority remained with the successive Popes. This is the holy character of the church and its acceptance is a precondition for redemption.

In the Christian view, man is free but morally responsible for his actions. Man is free to choose between right and wrong, but sinful as he chooses wrong. The story of man's fall as given in the *Genesis* is only an attempt to find a solution to the problem of evil in this world. By accepting the grace of God in the person of Jesus Christ, not only is sin forgiven, but man is cleaned, renewed and made holy by God's own spirit. Man becomes good by having faith in God and it is faith alone that can save man. Besides faith, stress is laid on the need of obeying commandments of God. Thus, faith and complete obedience are the basic tenets of Christianity. 'Blessed are they that have not

seen and yet have believed"— Jesus Christ. As for the form of worship and Christian devotion, prayer and praise are recognised as the form of worship of God as creator. There is place for both solitary contemplation and public worship. In practical life love of God finds expression through love and service of man. In the churches of Roman Catholic Order, an elaborate form of rituals was developed and the Christian priest occupied an important place. But in the Protestant churches, spiritual exercise prayer and praise are accompanied by preaching of the Gospel. The Catholic saints have explained two forms of prayer — ordinary and mystic. Ordinary prayer is practised by the men with faith. It is an attempt to dwell in the presence of God. It should be the normal habit of every Christian. Mystic prayer is passive contemplation of the soul — entering into direct communication with God.

In Christianity the concept of revelation is an important constituent of religious faith. There is anthropological background to the doctrine of revelation. The *Bible* suggests that the first created beings were pure and could have easy access to God. By eating the Forbidden Fruit, man committed sin and consequently a gulf developed between man and God. Not only that, man became a habitual sinner after his initial sin. Sin brought misery in human life. However, God is not merely just but also merciful. Though human suffering is fully justified God cannot rejoice in such suffering. Out of His concern for man He tries to help so that men are once again brought into his fold. Through the prophets God delivered his message to people. Revelation implies the expression of God's concern for humanity suffering under the weight of its own sins and the expression of His desire for their betterment.

Incarnation is the final step in the process of revelation. Instead of speaking to men through prophets, God comes down to stand face to face with man. The Prologue of the *Fourth Gospel (The Gospel of St. John)* gives an account of Incarnation. In the Bible Dictionary, Incarnation is described as an 'act of condescension', "Whereby the Son of God, Himself the very God and of one substance with His Father took to Himself human nature in order to accomplish its redemption and restoration." The Incarnate with the status of God placed Himself under truly human conditions and limitations to help man in his misery. Christian church is the channel of His activity in revealing Himself and redeeming man.

Christianity is essentially an ethical religion since ethics is the

most important part of the doctrine of Christ's teachings. The Sermon on the Mount is a document of moral ideas. In the *New Testament* many of the moral injunctions have been repeated. Men are asked to do right things and remain away from evil of all kinds. Love and consideration for fellowmen are preached. Jesus preached the morals of sacrifice and suffering, forgiveness and love. Christianity preaches love and service of man as the moral ideal for all men. A virtuous man is assured of redemption and, therefore, the greatest emphasis is laid on righteous living. According to the *Bible*, the first great duty of man is to love God and the second important duty is to love man. "Thou shalt do that which is right and good in the sight of the Lord"— The Bible. The Christian church stands for purity and charity.

Regarding the development of Christian religion we find that the creed, code, polity and ritual of the Christian church have undergone many changes. Opinions are divided between the Roman Catholics and the Protestants. After the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, his followers were faced with the problem of enforcement of strict discipline in the interest of organisation and the mission of the Lord. This led to the development of the Catholic church in Rome with a new system of law and faith with the principle of obedience. In the course of time, legalism was joined to it and the power of priests gradually increased. The hierarchy of Roman church came to be centred around the authority of the Pope. Christianity in its complete Roman development was thus merging of the supernatural with the natural in the form of the church and its authority through the Pope. People developed a belief that church should touch and control all aspects of life and gave the Roman church supreme authority. But unfortunately the church got entangled in politics and strengthened the feudal system. The attempt to reform Christianity and the church led to its division into two parts known as the Catholics and the Protestants.

Protestantism arose as a movement within Christianity which repudiated the authority of the Popes. The Protestants were separated from the Roman Communion in the Reformation in the sixteenth century. In its principles Protestantism is a return to primitive Christianity. The whole development of Christianity culminating in the doctrinal system of the Roman church is regarded as a corruption of the religion established by Christ. For the Protestants the *Bible* is the only infallible authority of Christian faith and morals. They lay the greatest emphasis on faith in the holy scriptures and religious believers are freed

from all external authority. Pleading for the unity of all Christians, Luther spearheaded the division within Christianity and repudiated support to the Popes. Due to division and differences, the reformers ultimately turned to the State for protection. But turmoil and war in Europe led to the State assuming the ultimate authority in Protestant nations. The Protestant Church also got divided into many sects. However, Roman Church continued to remain united and uniform in comparison to the diversity in the Protestant Church. For this reason, the Roman Catholic Church has greater hold on the Christian world.

Islam

Islam is one of the four great religions of the world with an elaborate system of theoretical and practical principles. It is a monotheistic religion based on firm faith in the existence of God and teachings of the prophet Muhammad. It aims at cultivating the attitude of complete obedience of the divine law which regulates all phenomena of nature. Followers of Islam believe that everything in nature as well as human birth, growth and death are governed by the all-pervasive law of God. Therefore, a perfect Muslim chooses to acknowledge his Creator, accepts Him as his real Master and submits to His laws and codes. The opening lines of the first chapter of the *Quran* lay down very clearly the basic principle of Islam as a religious faith:

> In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate
> Praise be to God, the Lord of the worlds,
> The Merciful one, the Compassionate one,
> Master of the Day of Doom.
> Thee alone we serve, to thee alone we cry for help.
> Guide us in the straight path,
> The path of them Thou art angry,
> Nor of those who go astray
>
> *(Al-Fatihah)*

Islam requires of a Muslim that he has absolute faith in its two articles, i.e, the existence of God and the teachings of Muhammad, the last of the prophets of God. Islam stands for complete faith in the teachings of the prophet and unflinching obedience to his ways of life. He who ignores the medium of the prophet is not considered to be a Muslim. Man is equipped with reason and judgement unlike other living creatures and he is given freedom of thought, choice and action. He must exercise his higher faculties for recognising God as the

Creator of everything. In his complete faith and unconditional surrender to the will of God or Allah, man should not suffer from any mental conflict. A person who misuses his reason and freedom in expressing doubt about the Creator is called a *kafir* in Islam. *Kafir* is ignorant of God and His law. Disbelief in God is the greatest sin in Islam.

Thus we can say that Islam means faith or *iman;* obedience to God and His law; faith in the teachings of Muhammad and accepting Him as the last prophet of God. A man who leads a life of obedience and submission to the will of God is called a *Momin* (faithful). In him there cannot be a shadow of doubt about the unity of God and His divine law. In the words of Sayyed Abdul Ala Maududi, "Relation of Islam to *iman* is the relation of tree to its seed." Where there is no *iman*, there is no Islam.

For Islam, faith is always accompanied by righteousness in thought and action. A man of strong faith always has the right perspective and pursues the right goals. Faith in the existence of the supreme Master directing the forces of universe, fills the heart of a true Muslim with love and humility, besides the desire to serve humanity. Islam has a strong moral basis and advocates to its followers a life filled with piety and truthfulness. A true Muslim must abstain from evil ideas and evil actions. He must earn his livelihood by fair means and hard work and, among his fellowmen, he must be an embodiment of goodness and nobility.

It has been pointed out earlier that in Islam faith in God is accompanied by faith in prophet Muhammad and his teachings. Before we come to deal with the teachings of Muhammad which are recognised as the articles of Islamic faith, it would be interesting and useful to deal very briefly with the historical developments before and after the prophet. It is believed by all Muslims that all human beings have descended from Adam and Eve, the earliest pair. Adam was the first man on earth and the first prophet of God. Between prophet Muhammad and Adam we come across the name Hazarat Ibrahim who first constructed Kaaba, the holy place of Muslims in Mecca. It is said that Ibrahim settled down at the present place of Kaaba after his exile from home by his first wife on account of his second marriage. He encountered the angel of God, Jabreel, who told him that he was a prophet. The angel also instructed him to construct Kaaba. Following that both Ibrahim and his son worked to carry out the instruction. It is believed that hundreds of years after Hazarat Ibrahim, Muhammad was born in Arabia and became the prophet of Islam.

Born at a crucial stage in the history of the Arab world, Muhammad became the pioneer of the Modern Age and a real leader of humanity. Muhammad lived for 63 years, but for first 40 years he was largely an unknown person. It was during this period that he placed *Hajare Aswad* (Pious Black Stone) in the wall of Kaaba when it was reconstructed by Abdul Mutalib, the grandfather of Muhammad. Angel Jabreel came to him and asked to him to proclaim himself as the prophet of God. During his remaining 23 years the prophet delivered the message of Islam to people and spent his time in meditation. Whatever he said was properly arranged later on by Hazarat Usman in the forms of holy scriptures of Muslims, the *Quran*, showing the greatness of the prophet. Sayyed Maududi writes, "Muhammad appeared as a unique philosopher, a great reformer, moulder of culture and civilisation, a great leader, highest judge and an incomparable general. This unlettered person uttered great wisdom. Besides teaching principles of ethics, laws of social culture exhibiting great theoretical knowledge and practical experiences he conquered the whole country of Arabia in nine years. He changed the modes of thinking, habits and morals of people." Spending years in meditation, fasts and reflection, the prophet of Islam revealed to the Arabs of his time the truth of Divine Law. On his own part, he sought the light of God whenever he was faced with any spiritual struggle.

After prophet Muhammad, the Muslim community was not bound to accept an individual or a body as the final religious authority. Muhammad was to be accepted as the last prophet of God. As for the Caliphs, they remained essentially the political heads of the Muslim community. Tension and infighting for supremacy was the characteristic feature of Arab life during those days. After the end of Caliphhood, this phenomenon continued with greater vigour. It culminated in the historic battle of Karbala where Imam Hussain, the younger son of Hazarat Ali and his small band of followers were killed. It also led to the development of a separate sect among Muslims known as the Shias who are the followers of Hussain. Shias accept the prophethood of Muhammad, but they do not accept the four Caliphs who followed the prophet. Instead, they recognise twelve Imams starting from Imam Hazarat Ali followed by Imam Hassan, Imam Hussain and eight others who followed in succession. The last of the twelve, the Shias believe, is yet to come. The Sunnis, as a separate sect among Muslims, are known as the real followers of the prophet and his four Caliphs.

The *Quran* is the sacred book of Muslims. Literally it implies announcement and traditionally it is recognised as "The Book of Religion". It contains utterances of the prophet Muhammad related to matters concerning religion, morality and other aspects of individual and social life. The *Quran* teaches that "God is one, God is He on whom all depend." This is the essence of the *Quran*. God has no form and none is like Him. To Him alone one must offer worship and to none else. All human beings are servants of God. The *Quran* lays down special emphasis on faith and good actions. In the words of Pandit Sundar Lal, "If we approach the *Quran* with sincerity and love we are bound to realise that it offers to us that universal humanism which is the essence of all religions."

The religious teachings of Islam may be divided under three heads. These are: the articles of faith, the teachings pertaining to code of conduct for Muslims, and the Islamic law. Starting from the first part, there are five articles of faith as taught by prophet Muhammad as the fundamental basis of religion and the essential conditions for being a true Muslim. These are as follows:

1. Faith in the unity of God as expressed in the Kalima of Islam — *La ilaha illallah* (there is no deity but Allah). It implies that God or Allah is limitless and only He is worthy of worship. He is the Creator, the Controller and Governor of the universe. This faith is to create broadmindedness in the followers of Islam accompanied by humbleness, self-respect and fearlessness about things other than God.
2. Faith in God's Angels. This means faith in the imperceptible spiritual beings who act under the Command of God. Jabreel and the two Angels whose references are found in the Islamic scriptures are these beings.
3. Faith in the Book of God. Islam recognises that there have been divine books before the holy *Quran* but they lacked originality. Therefore Muslims are directed to have faith in the *Quran* as the word of God.
4. Faith in the prophets of God and in prophet Muhammad as the last Messenger. There have been messengers of God but Muslims are directed to have absolute faith in prophet Muhammad as the true prophet of God.
5. Faith in life after death. The prophet has asked people to believe in the concept of resurrection after death and in the day of judgement. There will be a time when life will come to an end.

Besides these faiths, Islam prescribes a strict code of conduct for

all Muslims to follow in order to preserve and regulate their religious life. Of the four important injunctions, the first is daily prayer or *Ibadat*. The purpose of prayer is to submit oneself to God. Under the obligation of prayer, a Muslim is required to offer five prayers everyday. Besides this, all good deeds performed during the day are also considerd as an act of prayer. The real aim of prayer is to reaffirm faith in God. It imparts training to the believer in moral and spiritual life. Prayer on every Friday is a must for all Muslims in order to forge a bond of unity and mutual love.

The second code of conduct is fasting during the month of *Ramzan* (ninth month of the lunar year). Fasting is a rigorous discipline prescribed for all Muslims as an act of faith in God and it implies fear of the day of judgement. The third obligation for Muslims is helping the poor and needy through charity or *Zakat*. Every Muslim whose economic condition is good must give a part of his earning (at least $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent annually) to really deserving beings. *Zakat* should be in the name of God. The last obligation for all Muslims is pilgrimage to Mecca *(Hajj)* provided they can afford it. *Hajj* is manifestation of real love for God.

The last part of the religious teachings of Islam is constituted of the Shariah. It is the Islamic law in the form of practical aspects of the religious and social doctrines preached by prophet Muhammad. Shariah implies the legal aspect of Islam in the form of the law of God which is meant to regulate individual and social life for the welfare of man. It also forbids what is harmful. Rights and obligations are clearly laid down through the Shariah. Very briefly, these are the rights of God, the rights of the self, the rights of other men and the rights of all creatures.

Under the right of God men are asked to act according to time, condition and convenience. Every Muslim is required to be honest and sincere and should seek guidance from God. He should have firm faith in God. Under the rights of the self, Muslims are forbidden to consume harmful and unclean things. They are asked to satisfy their desires by proper and right methods. Under Islam law suicide is forbidden as life belongs to God. Third, it is obligatory for all Muslims to respect the interests of others in society. Therefore, telling lies, cheating, blackmarketing, and gambling are forbidden. Besides these, forgery, adultery and backbiting are to be avoided. In this connection detailed rules are prescribed to regulate social life. Further, Muslims are required not to show disrespect to men of other religions. A true

Muslim should be a symbol of goodness and humanity. As for other creatures men are asked to avoid cruelty to living creatures. Killing for fun or sport is forbidden, Thus, the Shariah lays down the law of Islam for Muslims for all times to come.

Sikhism

Sikhism as a religion arose out of an attempt to reform and simplify Hinduism and Islam and stands firmly on its own ground as an independent religion to the same extent as other religions. Religion means faith in the oneness of God and dedication to good deeds. With this very simple definition, the founder of Sikhism, Baba Guru Nanak, laid the basis of a thoroughly tolerant and universal religion with clearly defined principles. While it retains an attitude of respect and tolerance for what is good in Hinduism, Sikhism is opposed to caste, divisions and the ceremonial sacrifices associated with Hinduism. The uniqueness of Sikhism lies in the fact that there is nothing in it which is not found in other religions, though it excludes all that which is unnecessary for man's direct communion with God.

Sikhism arose as a protest against religious formalism and developed a simple framework with emphasis on spiritual discipline and practical life. With a pronounced social outlook and objective, Guru Nanak stressed the practical aspect of religion. He said all men are equal and kept a Hindu and a Muslim as his constant companions. It is this social outlook which makes every dovout Sikh to end his prayer with the words, *Nanak Nam Charhdi Kala Tere Bhane Sarbat da bhala* — may peace and prosperity come to one and all in the world. Sikhism is a practical religion, therefore, it is free from an elaborate system of dogmas and rituals. Nanak declared that religion did not consist of mere words. According to him, he who looks on all men as equal, is truly religious. "Religion consisteth not in wanderings to tombs or places of cremation or in sitting in attitude of contemplation." Nanak felt that *avataras* and divinities, prophets and saints, *pirs* and *dargah*, obscured the vision of men and destroyed the very foundation of any true religious belief. He integrated Hindu and Muslim culture into Sikhism as the ideal of such integration in its best and most successful practical form. Against the religious conservatism of Hinduism with its rigidities of caste and ritualism, Nanak emphasised the broad and essential elements of religion — faith in and devotion to one God. The independent character of Sikhism as a religion is further proved by the injunctions of Guru Gobind Singh — the

tenth Guru, the *Guru Granth Sahib* as the Sikh holy book and the Sikh religious ceremonies as different from Hinduism.

The history of Sikhism is nearly five hundred years old since as its founder Guru Nanak lived betwen 1469 and 1538 A.D. Born in a Hindu Khatri family of Talwandi (Nankana Saheb) in Punjab, the Guru was disillusioned by the two prevalent religions of Hinduism and Islam due to their dogmas, superstitions and rigidities. Hence, he felt the need of a third religion which would have the good points of both without their shortcomings. Guru Nanak clearly understood the needs of his time and he introduced reforms in religion with a spirit of tolerance and enlightenment. Nanak rekindled the true spirit of religion and humanity. Hindus had reduced their religion to ceremonialism and Muslims were afflicted with religious intolerance. Nanak worked to transform the world with his wisdom, tolerance and good sense. He declared that no heart which shuts out truth and love can be the abode of God.

Guru Nanak was critical of fanaticism in religion. He said, "To worship an image, to make a pilgrimage to a shrine, to remain in a desert, and yet have the mind impure is all vain. To be saved, worship only the truth." Sikhism as preached by Nanak can be safely characterised as ethical idealism. His teachings are plain, simple and straightforward —*Nanak Dukhiya Sab Sansar— So Sukhiya Jin Name Adhar* (Happy are those who surrender to God). Refuting meaningless rites, ceremonies and customs in the name of religion, Nanak emphasised the importance of good actions to be religious. Religion as preached by him stands for monotheistic spiritualism, a social order based on justice and equality, broad ethical socialism, patriotism and creative action. The central belief in Sikhism is that there is one God who is just, loving, righteous, formless yet the Creator of the universe.

With emphasis on mental discipline, purity of life and conduct dedicated to the good of all regardless of caste and creed, Guru Nanak did not present Sikhism as an elaborate doctrine or a body of dogmas. He said simple things in simple language. But the seed of faith which he planted flowered in the case of nine succeeding Gurus spreading its fragrance all around. During the course of history Sikhism developed into a great force binding its followers with a tremendous spirit of oneness.

From the account of his life available through various biographies, we know that for the first twenty-five years Guru Nanak lived a

worldly life. However, in 1497 he decided to renounce the world and serve mankind. For the rest of his life, Nanak undertook missionary journeys throughout the length and breadth of India, meeting men of different faiths and explaining his view of religion. Nanak also went outside the country to Mecca, Iraq and Ceylon. Everywhere he asked men to see God as universal and not to indulge in practices which created division among mankind. At the age of 52 Guru Nanak selected the right bank of River Ravi just 42 miles from Amritsar to found the headquarters of missionary work. Thus the abode of God, the city of Kartarpur was founded by Guru Nanak to consolidate the new doctrines of constant divine remembrance, universal love, truthful living, selfless service of humanity, and the equality and fraternity of all mankind.

Instead of resting after his prolonged journeys, Guru Nanak was actively engaged during the last part of his life in diffusing the divine wisdom and preaching the essence of ideal human conduct. The main ideal behind the establishment of the Temple of Truth at Kartarpur was translating the eternal truths of religion into practice. An atmosphere surcharged with a spirit of conviction, inspiration and enthusiasm was created for purposeful existence and direct experience of the Divinity of God within oneself. Besides regular religious activities consisting of congregational singing and listening to holy discourse, Guru Nanak introduced an extremely important feature of Sikhism, i.e. the *langar* (free community kitchen in *pangat*). Everyone, irrespective of caste, creed and sex, would be served with free food. In order to perpetuate his mission and the tradition founded by him, Guru Nanak transferred his mantle to his most trusted disciple Bhai Lehna, who came to be known as Guru Angad. In this way Guru Angad assumed the responsibility of Sikh leadership as the second Guru under the instructions of Guru Nanak himself.

Guru Angad was fully equipped with the Sikh tradition and he carried on the mission with full vigour. His special contribution was the invention of the Gurmukhi alphabet as the sacred script of the Sikhs to be used for writing the Guru's hymns. The third Guru, Amardas, worked for the abolition of caste distinctions in Indian society and strengthened the practice of common kitchen. Guru Ramdas, the fourth Guru of Sikhism founded the city of Amritsar and constructed the sacred *sarowar* of the Golden Temple. Guru Arjun Dev, son of Guru Ramdas and the fifth Guru constructed the Harminadar Saheb (Golden Temple) in the middle of the *sarowar*. He

also worked to compile a volume of hymns in 1604, half of which were his own composition. When completed under his supervision, it became known as the *Granth Saheb*, the most sacred book of the Sikhs.

Sikhism as religious faith had gained considerable strength with a large number of followers and had started developing into a powerful movement. The execution of Guru Arjun threatened the faith as a whole. Consequently, the sixth Guru Hargobind decided to arm himself and his followers for self-protection. He built the first Sikh stronghold against the Mughals who were not happy with the growing influence of the Sikh Gurus. He was followed by Guru Har Rai and Guru Har Krishan. The ninth, Guru Teg Bahadur worked to spread Sikhism and made the supreme sacrifice of his life in 1675 for the protection of the truths and ideals of religion.

The order of Gurus which started with Guru Nanak came to an end with the tenth Guru Gobind Singh. He was the most influential after the first Guru. The sacrifice of Guru Teg Bahadur for the cause of righteousness had already conditioned the mind of Guru Gobind Singh to carry on the mission of the great Gurus. Due to his extraordinary personal qualities and his determination to fight for the cause of truth and humanistic philosophy, Guru Gobind Singh made a unique contribution in strenghtening the Sikh religion. His life is an immortal story of struggle for the cause of the true spirit of religion undergoing great hardships and tremendous sacrifices.

Keeping in view the conditions of his time, Guru Gobind Singh felt that the Sikh faith could not be protected without the force of arms. Hence, he laid the foundation of *Khalsa* which is considered as his greatest contribution to the cause fo Sikhism. The story of the founding of *Khalsa* through the baptism of the sword — the ceremony of five *piaras* is too well known. *Khalsa* for Guru Gobind Singh was the highest ideal of manhood. He asked all those who wanted to serve humanity through Sikhism to join the *khalsa panth* as a regular member and receive baptism as the initial step *(Amrita)*. Through the instituition of *Khalsa*, Guru Gobind Singh wanted to inculcate the sense of discipline in his followers. For him religion was the force which bound different individuals together to work for a higher pupose in the world. Organisation of the *Khalsa* was only to increase the effectiveness of that work. Prescribing the five necessary conditions for all Sikhs, Guru Gobind Singh gave the slogan —*Vahe Guruji da khalsa, Vahe Guruji di fateh* (the Khalsa of

God, victory to God). The five essential conditions are *kach, kara, kirpan, kesh* and *kang. Kach* or a particualr kind of underwear is meant for briskness of movement at times of action; *kara* or the iron bracelet on the right hand is the sign of sternness and constraint; *kirpan* is a small dagger meant for self-defence and an emblem of power and dignity; to combine sternness and strength with saintliness the Guru prescribed *kesh* or long hair; *kang* or comb is meant to keep K*esh* clean. These are the rituals adopted by the Sikhs at the time of baptism. Such Sikhs are to take the vow of purity, love and service. In order to ensure unity of the *Khalsa panth* and promotion of Sikhism, Guru Gobind Singh issued the injunction — *Sab Sikhan Ko Hukam Hai Guru Manao Granth* (All followers of Sikhism to consider Granth Saheb as the Guru after him). In this ways the tradition of Sikh Gurus came to an end with Guru Gobind Singh.

In the Hindu tradition, the guru or spiritual teacher, who is supposed to lead his disciples from the darkness of ignorance to the light of knowledge, has been assigned a very high position of respect and reverence. It is said that guru is Brahma, guru is Vishnu, guru is Lord Shiva; guru is the supreme manifestation of the ultimate reality. Hence, a disciple offers his salutation to his guru. Following this tradition in Sikhism, Gurus have been assigned the supreme position. The Japji says, "The guru is Shiva, the guru is Vishnu and Brahma, the guru is Parvati, Lakshmi, Saraswati." Guru Nanak held the view that the religious world had gone astray, therefore, a new and direct revelation was again necessary. He declared that his own Guru was God. The followers of Nanak accepted him as their Guru since he revealed the true spirit of religion.

Sikhism as a religion is more a way of life than a set of beliefs. Special importance is given to Gurus who guided men on the right religious path, removed the barriers of caste and united man with God. The Sikh Gurus were perfect in all respects and have been described as such in the Sikh scriptures. Guru Nanak said, "Everybody is subject to error, only the Guru and God are without error." Corresponding to the Guru there is a *sishya* or disciple who reposes absolute confidence in his Guru and follows his teachings faithfully. The term 'sikh' means *sishya*, the disciple who is always prepared to learn. Thus there is an inseparable relation between a Sikh and the Gurus as spiritual and moral guides. In order to increase the power of individuals the Guru organised them into *sangats* or holy assembly. In Sikhism the concept of Divine Incarnation is denied. Hence, the

Gurus denied that the Supreme Being could take upon Himself the body of an individual man. The place of Guru is between man and God. Therefore, the Sikhs are forbidden to worship the Gurus. Guru Gobind Singh clearly said "They who call me the supreme being shall fall into the pit of hell."

Thus we can say that the Guru in Sikhism is recognised as the vital link in man's spiritual progress. He sets an example for all men. As a perfectly realised soul the Guru is capable of leading the believer to the highest stage of spiritual consciousness. The place of Guru is so central in Sikhism that the Sikh faith itself has been called the path of disciplship.

Coming to the essentials of Sikhism we may start with the opening words of the Sikh scripture, the Guru Granth.

Ikk Oangkar Satinam Karta Purkh Nirbhou
Nirvair Akal Murat Ajuni Saibhang
Gur Prasad.

This preamble to the *Japu*, which is the morning prayer of all Sikhs is the Mul Mantra, the seed of Sikh belief and the core of Sikh thought. It explains the concept of God as it is accepted in Sikhism. In a free English rendering the Mul Mantra would mean: "There is but one God who is expressed by the word 'Oang'. Call Him Sati (satya) for He is. He is the creator of all things and is all pervasive. Since He is the Creator, He is without fear and without enmity. He is not limited to time, and yet He exists. He is not subject to birth and decay. He is perennially self-existent. He is Enlightener. He can be realised only through His grace."

This explains that Sikhism is monotheistic religion. Ultimately only God, Waheguru is real. "Akaal Purakh is the only reality." God is the only reality. In the Japji it is said, "The True One was in the beginning, the True One was in the primal age. The True One is O Nanak, and the True One also shall be", with such statements Guru Nanak manifested, a desire to found a religion which should be acceptable to both Hindus and Muhammadans. Oankar in Sikhism resembles Kalima in Islam — "La illah Illallah". Sikhism teaches that God is not born on earth in any form human or otherwise, so no person, however holy, is in any sense Divine. God's spark dwells equally in all. In Sikhism God is not to be recognised in man's image and therefore, Guru Nanak called Him *nirankar* or without form. "All the Gurus believe that He is diffused throughout creation." Guru Nanak

said, "Think upon the One who is contained in everything." Similarly Gur Ramdass said, "Thou, O God, art in everything and in all places." For the Sikhs, God is one without an equal, hence, the Christian view of Jesus as the Son of God is not acceptable to them. In the Sikh scriptures the view of God as the ultimate reality is repeatedly asserted. The *Asa di var* gives the fundamentals of Sikh belief in God as clear-cut monotheism. The world is rooted in God who is the only reality. God is indivisible, the highest moral Being, and does not belong to any particular people. Love and faith are the only ways of realising Him. The method of worship are singing in praise of God and meditation of His name. Guru Nanak ridiculed the prevalent Hindu religious practices in which idol worship, useless rituals and caste exclusiveness clouded the real truth of religion. In one of his hymns, the Guru said:

> The Hindus have forgotten God, and are going the wrong way.
> They worship according to the instructions of Narad.
> They are blind and dumb, the blindest of the blind.
> The ignorant fools take stones and worship them.
> O Hindus, how shall the stone which itself sinketh carry you across?

Thus we see that the concept of God in Sikhism is simple, more understandable and free from formalism.

Nanak laid emphasis on direct experience of the divine without the meditation of ceremonies, penance, books, priests and creeds. Sikhism founded by Nanak is a practical religion and its essence is explained in three injunctions — *Nama Japna, Kirt Karni* and *Wandchakhna. Nama Japna* is meditation of the name of God and it is at the core of the Sikh faith. It implies contemplation, humility and surrender of the ego. *Kirt Karni* is earning livelihood by hard labour. It implies labour, charity and no exploitation.*Wandchakhna* means sharing a part of one's earning with the poor and needy.

Sikhism believes in the law of *karma* (action) and rebirth. The law of *karma* has absolute sway throughout the universe. In his explanation of the theory of *karma,* Guru Nanak made a significant contribution to Indian ethical thought. Man is responsible for what he is, he can liberate himself from his state of sufferings by self-discipline and good actions. *Karma* is action involving thinking, speech and action. In Sikhism *karma* is action with volition. Without volition action is not *karma* and has no effect on rebirth. Name and form are nothing

but the embodiment of past *karmas.* In the words of Nirmal Kumar Jain, "Guru Nanak removed fatalism from the *karma* theory. By our action we can remove the effect of past *karmas.* In this connection Nanak gave valuable advice to his people who wish to attain holiness — practice of *Nam, kirtan,* enshrine the Lord in their hearts." Sikhism believes that the state of soul after death is determined by its *karmas* (actions) while contained in the body.

The supreme object of human attainment, according to Sikhism, is absorption in God. The Gurus held the view that man might attain the eternal bliss without leaving the ordinary duties of life. For absorption in God, two methods have been suggested: firstly, meditation on God with sufficient attention; and secondly, by spending life in conformity with the teachings of the Gurus.

As a highly moralised religion, Sikhism attaches great importance to ethical conduct. While there is emphasis on knowledge of truth, greater importance is attached to true living. The Gurus advised their followers to use life on earth as an instrument for the service of mankind. Much emphasis is laid on *sewa* or selfless service. True religion finds expression in actions dedicated to the good of others. To quote a line from the Guru Granth, "The perfect one always revels in doing good to others." Unity of Godhead implies the brotherhood of men. Sikhism lays special emphasis on love and brotherhood of men and prohibits any distinction on the basis of caste or colour. To quote Guru Gobind Singh, "The Hindus and the Muslims are all one" and asked his followers to recognise the oneness of human beings.

In Sikh religion, man is asked to remain active in the service of mankind while praying to God. "There can be no worship without good actions *(Japji).*" Actions should be inspired to please God. Guru Gobind Singh said, "Recognise all human nature as one. All men are the same, although they appear different under different influences." This advice is in accordance with the basic philosophy of Sikhism which recognises that the ultimate source of all that is in us is God alone. Without Him, there is no strength in us. The infinite is within us but the cloud of ignorance hides it from us. Therefore, the problem of good and evil in our life is simply the problem of union and disunion with God *(Japji).* A true Sikh is asked to abide by the teachings of Gurus, and to himself dedicated to the service of mankind.

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10

CONTEMPORARY SPECULATION

Introduction

The history of philosophy began with the basic question regarding the origin of this world. This question was widely debated in ancient Greece and several possible answers were suggested. But subsequently many other problems, such as the nature of reality, source and validity of knowledge, limitations and possibilities of human reasoning, norms of human conduct arose as a result of philosophical analysis. The net result of all these developments is before us in the form of the history of philosophy stretching to nearly three thousand years. This history can be roughly divided into three periods: the ancient, the medieval and the modern.

The ancient philosophers were chiefly contemplative and admired the beauty of the natural world. They considered the natural world as an expression of harmony and order. Behind the beauty and harmony of the natural world these philosophers visualised the existence of a supernatural reality as the first cause, the ground and the presupposition of the natural world.

In the medieval period the idea of reality behind the natural world turned into firm faith in the existence of God as the Creator. With medieval philosophers faith determined the objects and limitations of knowledge. Philosophers discussed the attributes of God and immortality of the soul and philosophical discussions were largely confined to these issues. Dogmas and superstitions coloured reasoning. There was too much dependence on supernatural reality and belief in fatalism destroyed human initiative and self-confidence. With this background, the Church became the supreme authority in all affairs of men. Nobody could think of violating the commands of the Church.

Modern western philosophy may be described as a strong reaction against the ancient and medieval attitudes towards the basic problems of man and the world. It marked a complete break with the past thinking and was the beginning of a fresh approach. However, we cannot deny that modern western philosophy was the result of speculations,

investigations and beliefs cherished during the ancient and the medieval periods. Faith was replaced by reason as the modern thinker grew analytical. The modern mind did not see the world as a living whole but as a machine governed by the mechanical laws of nature. With emphasis on reasoning, modern philosophers refused to take things for granted. Dogmas and superstitions were discarded and individuality was emphasised in deciding things. The modern philosopher became scientific in temperament and traced the mechanical causes of the world. Showing indifference to the idea of supernatural reality he grew naturalistic in approach. Man rather than some supernatural entity, became the centre of analysis. Thus, modern philosophy may be described as anti-scholastic, naturalistic and humanistic.

With it's emphasis on reason and methods of analysis, modern philosophy is characterised by extreme intellectualism. All the philosophers of the modern period from Bacon, Hobbes and Descartes to Hegel, Schopenhauer and Nietzsche were gifted with extraordinary intellectual ability and made original contributions to the development of philosophical thinking. But the main thrust of all the thinkers was on metaphysical and epistemological problems. They remained occupied mainly with the problem of ultimate reality, sources and validity of knowledge besides ethical and psychological issues. In dealing with these problems modern philosophers exhibited profound faith in the power of reason and a keen desire to know the truth through independent enquiry. Consequently modern philosophy is characterised by two main tendencies known as rationalism and empiricism. For rationalism, only *a priori* truths, clearly and distinctly perceived through reason constitute knowledge. As against this, empiricism denies that there are such *a priori* truths. For empiricists all valid knowledge is derived from experience rather than reason.

By rationalism we mean the attitude which makes reason the standard of knowledge. It is the view that all genuine knowledge consists of universal and necessary judgements. Genuine knowledge cannot come from sense perception or experience but must have its foundation in thought or reason. Truths which have their origin in the mind itself are the only valid truths. Contrary to this, empiricism rejects the view of inborn truths and innate ideas. All knowledge springs from sense perception or experience. For empiricists the world of experience is the object of philosophy, and the function of philosophy is to interpret this world.

Contemporary philosophy is marked by three main features — first, critical evaluation and assessment of philosophical concepts in order to reject those ideas and beliefs which were found to be irrelevent to, man. G.E. Moore's criticism of idealism and logical positivist's criticism of metaphysics are examples of this. Secondly, once again philosophers started discussion on the aim and scope of philosophy. Existentialism asserted that philosophy must create consciousness in man about his own responsibility towards himself and others. Philosophy should be closely related to life and must deal with the problems related with actual human existence. Pragmatism suggested that a philosopher must be a practical man and only those beliefs and ideas should be accepted that are useful in actual living. Third, philosophy in the contemporary period entered into new areas of investigation and analysis. Let us now study the major schools of contemporary philosophy in greater detail.

Logical Positivism

A set of propositions put forward by some mathematicians and philosophers of the 'Vienna Circle' between 1920 and 1940 came to be known as logical positivism. The Vienna Circle consisted of a group of philosophers and it was formed when Moritz Schlich took the chair of philosophy at the university in Vienna in Germany in 1922. The prominent members of the Circle were Friedrich Waismann, Edgar Zilsel, Felix Kaufmann, Herbert Feige, Victor Kraft, Philipp Frank. In 1926 Rudolf Carnap, after joining Vienna University as instructor in philosophy, became the central figure and principal exponent of the circle's ideas. The Vienna Circle was organised with two main aims; to provide a secure foundation for the sciences, and to demonstrate the meaninglessness of metaphysics. For this, they employed the method of logical analysis, especially of language.

The logical positivists of the Vienna circle claimed to continue the British empirical tradition of nineteenth century. The term positivism was first used by the French philosopher and sociologist August-Comte (1798-1857) to emphasise the importance of scientific analysis. The term logical is mainly associated with the Vienna Circle and it implied that the laws of logic could determine how language should be used to convey meaning. No statement would count as meaningful unless it was a purely logical or analytic statement or if it was an empirical or synthetic statement. A logical statement is meaningful because it contains its meaning within itself without referring to anything outside it, while an empirical statement is meaningful only if it

can be verified.

Inspiration for a new type of thinking to logical positivists came from the philosophical ideas of Mach and Bertrand Russell. Ludwig Wittgenstein also exercised considerable influence on their thinking through his ideas. Wittgenstein is credited with two movements in philosophy known as logical atomism *(tractatus-Logico-Philosophicus)* and linguistic philosophy *(philosophical Investigations)*. The accounts of mathematics and logic together with the principle of verifiability given by Wittgenstein were particularly appreciated by logical positivists. In 1928 the members of Vienna Circle registered themselves as Ernst Mach Society with object of propagating the scientific outlook. In 1929 they brought out a manifesto under the title *The Scientific World View: The Vienna Circle*. For further development and publicity of their ideas the positivists organised a series of conferences, the first of which was held at Prague in 1929. This helped in attracting the attention of philosophers like C.W. Morris in America and Gilbert Ryle and A.J. Ayer in England. But unfortunately the tempo of logical positivist thinking could not be sustained for long. The movement grew weak with the death of Schlick and, consequently, Ernst Mach Society was dissolved in 1938. In spite of efforts of Cambridge trained philosophers like A.J. Ayer, the movement disintegrated by 1940.

Ludwig Wittgenstein's logical analysis of language and experience impressed the philosophers of Vienna Circle. It became the basis of their conception of meaning on which the superstructure of logical positivism was raised. Language is used for stating facts. It is a human creation and is intended to serve human purposes. Since words and sentences have meaning, the basic purpose of language is to convey some information. For logical positivists, the meaning of a sentence is essentially based on the information it conveys. Language is recognised as an instrument by which we acquire knowledge. As a human tool it can be used only for what it is capable of doing. When language is used without conveying a meaning, it is misused and leads us nowhere. Meaning of a linguistic notion and the laws of logic should determine the use of language so that statements do not become self-contradictory. According to logical positivists a non-analytic statement would count as meaningful only if it can be empirically verified. Metaphysical statements are not empirically verifiable and, therefore, not meaningful. It is with this conclusion that the positivists of the Vienna Circle stage a departure from traditional philosophical thinking.

The positivists conception of meaning leads to the elimination of metaphysics. As explained in an earlier chapter, the word metaphysics means what comes after physics. The logical positivists maintain that metaphysics deals with problems of a non-empirical nature. It is concerned with a reality that transcends the limits of all possible sense, experience. Hence, metaphysical statements are devoid of any meaning and convey no information. Dissatisfied with the pronouncements which refer to the supersensible, logical positivists framed their own criterion of literal significance with the aim of ridding philosophy of these pronouncements and making it intellectually more respectable. For the positivists metaphysical propositions at their face value are nonsensical since such propositions do not convey anything which can be verified in real life. A.J. Ayer makes this point very clear in his book *Language, Truth and Logic*, "One cannot overthrow a system of transcendent metaphysics merely by criticising the way in which it comes into being. What is required is rather a criticism of the nature of the actual statements which comprise it. We shall maintain that no statement which refers to a reality transcending the limits of all possible sense experience can possibly have any literal significance; from which it must follow that the labours of those who have striven to describe such a reality have all been devoted to the production of nonsense."

According to A.J. Ayer, human understanding is so constituted that it is lost in contradictions if it ventures to go beyond the limits of actual or possible experience. Metaphysics deals with supernatural and transcendent reality which lies beyond human experience. Therefore, in metaphysics we are likely to make statements which may conflict with statements of empirical reality. The specific charge of logical positivists against metaphysics is that it is constituted of sentences which fail to conform to the conditions under which alone a sentence can be literally significant. A sentence which embodies a genuine proposition deals with matters of fact. No conceivable observation can show that the world revealed to us by sense-experience is unreal. Therefore, anyone who rejects the empirical world as a world of mere appearance and therefore unreal, is saying something which, according to logical positivists, is literally nonsensical. Ayer asserts that Philosophy as a genuine branch of knowledge must be distinguished from metaphysics since utterances of the metaphysician are nonsensical in nature. The tragedy of a metaphysician is that he does not intend to write nonsense but lapses into it by being not

sufficiently aware of the structure of language and the criterion of meaningful statements or by committing errors in reasoning, such an error is the view that the empirical world is unreal.

Questions about transcendental reality are not allowed by logical positivists as a genuine function of philosophy. For them philosophy has to be not speculative but critical. Thus, a new role is assigned to philosophy by logical positivists. There are people who believe that philosophy is to synthesise the empirical results of the different branches of science into a world view. According to logical positivists this is not the real function of philosophy. Philosophy should be deprived of its metaphysical quest and led away from the construction of world views. However, it can undertake a very useful and worthy programme of clarification, interpretation and coordination of the results of sciences through logical analysis. The proper function of philosophy, according to logical positivists, is to analyse "the statements asserted by scientists", and "to study their kinds and relations, and analyse terms as components of those statements".

The function of philosopher is not to construct a deductive system on the basis of certain first principles. In the search for first principles and transcendental reality speculative philosophy has only ignored the common sense beliefs about the real. According to A.J. Ayer, "a philosopher has no right to despise the beliefs of common sense. If he does so he merely displays his ignorance of the true purpose of his enquiries. What he is entitled to despise is the unreflecting analysis of those beliefs, which takes the grammatical structure of the sentences as a trustworthy guide to its meaning." Instead of trying to formulate speculative truths or looking for first principles, philosophy must be confined to clarification and analysis of linguistic statement. Philosophers should be concerned with the way in which we speak about physical properties and the propositions of philosophy are not factual but linguistic in character. Philosophy has to clarify the confusions that arise due to misunderstanding the nature of language.

One of the most important tenets of logical positivists is the principle of verification. They declare metaphysics to be nonsensical since it consists of statements which fail to conform to the conditions under which alone a statement can be literally significant. For testing the genuineness of statements logical positivists formulated the criterion of verifiability. A statement in the form of a sentence is factually significant if it is verifiable. Prof. Ayer says, "The criterion which we use to prove the genuineness of apparent statements of fact is the

criterion of verifiability." An empirical statement has meaning only if it is capable of being verified by a set procedure. "A simple way to formulate the principle", Ayer says in the introduction to the second edition of his famous book *(Language, Truth and Logic)*, "would be to say that a sentence had literal meaning if and only if, the proposition it expressed was either analytic or empirically verifiable." Under this criterion no metaphysical statement can be verified.

Logical positivists assert that philosophy as a genuine branch of knowledge must be distinguished from metaphysics since metaphysical statements carry no literal significance. A statement has no literal meaning unless what it states is open to verification by sense-observation. With the help of this principle various metaphysical propositions are proved nonsensical. The positivists, for example, say that metaphysical utterances is unreal and reality is of the nature of supernatural, carries no empirical significance. Though our senses sometime deceive us, yet it is only sense-experience that informs us that we are mistaken. No conceivable observation can show that the world revealed through sense-experience is unreal. The result is that anyone who says that the sensible world is a world of appearance as opposed to reality talks nonsense if we judge it by the criterion of verifiability.

It further asserted that the entire class of significant propositions are either tautologies or empirical hypothesis. The metaphysical propositions are devoid of factual content on the one hand and are not *a priori* on the other. In other words says Ayer, "a metaphysical sentence is a sentence which purports to express a genuine proposition but does in fact express neither a tautology nor an empirical hypothesis." One may say that a metaphysician does not talk nonsense intentionally but being deceived by grammar or through committing errors of reasoning he lapses into it. Instead of rejecting philosophy the positivists reject metaphysics by the application of the criterion of verifiability and assert that philosophy has to be analytical. The function of philosophical analysis is to show how statements containing certain types of expression as table, chair, etc., can be replaced by equivalent statements which omit these expressions and refer only to actual or possible sensory observations. A philosopher should be concerned with the definitions in use.

As for logical positivists theory of knowledge it may be said that *prima facie* there are two kinds of knowledge. There is knowledge of sensory facts, and knowledge of non-sensory facts. The former is

obtained through sense-experience; the latter does not involve the activity and employment of senses. Knowledge of non-sensory facts is usually divided into two categories, analytic and synthetic. Of these, the former is regarded by logical positivists as tautologies, the latter as meaningless. Logical positivists assert that the world consists of only sensory facts, of the facts that can be known in sense-experience. Such facts belong to the natural world and are studied by science. Philosophy to be relevant has to act as the logic of science. It must deal with logical analysis of the concepts and sentences of the sciences. Traditionally philosophy has been thought to concern itself with the laws as opposed to the phenomena that exhibit them, and to concern itself with the nature of an ideal world. All this is denied by the logical positivists. All meaningful propositions, according to them, may be divided into two classes, those which concern matters of empirical facts, and those which are *a priori*. All knowledge is confined to the empirical world and is imparted through empirically verifiable propositions. There can be no *a priori* knowledge of reality. To say that a proposition is true *a priori* is to say that it is a tautology. And tautologies, though they may serve to guide us in our empirical search for knowledge, do not in themselves contain any information about any matter of fact.

Logical positivists in general, and A.J. Ayer in particular, are also known for their distinctive views on truth and probability. For them there is no problem of truth as it is ordinarily conceived. The traditional conception of truth as a 'real quality' or a real relation is due to an invalid analysis of language. To say that a proposition is false is to say that it is self-contradictory. But an empirical proposition or a system of empirical propositions may be free from such contradictions and yet may not be true. In fact, there is no absolutely certain empirical proposition since these may be confirmed or discredited by actual sense experience. Empirical propositions are of the nature of hypotheses which may be described as rules governing our expectations of future experience. The function of empirical hypothesis is to enable us to anticipate experience. If an observation to which a given proposition is relevant conforms to our expectation, the truth of that proposition is confirmed. One can say that it's probability of truth has been increased. Observation increases the probability of a proposition and our confidence in it.

According to Ayer "the terms true and false connote nothing, but function in a sentence simply as marks of assertion and denial. And in

that case there can be no sense in asking us to analyse the concept of truth." Therefore, instead of vainly discussing the nature of truth, it is more fruitful to consider how an empirical proposition is proved valid. To this Ayer says, "We test the validity of an empirical hypothesis by seeing whether it actually fulfils the function which it is designed to fulfil. And we know that the function of an empirical hypothesis is to enable us to anticipate experience."

Lastly, we may refer to logical positivists' views about ethics and ethical terms. Ordinary ethical statements, i.e. statements of value can be divided into four main classes: (i) propositions which express definitions of ethical terms; (ii) propositions describing the phenomena of moral experience and their causes; (iii) propositions exhorting moral virtues; and (iv) actual ethical judgements. Ethical philosophers have generally ignored the distinctions between these four classes. According to logical positivists, a strictly philosophical treatise should make no ethical pronouncements. This is so because ethical statements are not verifiable and hence they are not genuine synthetic propositions. The fundamental ethical concepts are unanalysable, inasmuch as there is no criterion by which one can test the validity of the judgements in which they occur. Ethical judgements have no objective validity whatsoever and therefore it is impossible to find a criterion for determining the validity of ethical judgements. Linguistic statements which express moral judgements do not assert anything factual. These are expressions of feelings and as such do not come under the category of truth and falsehood. Ethical concepts are pseudo-concepts and therefore unanalysable.

According to logical possitivists, ethics as a branch of knowledge is nothing more than a department of psychology and sociology. Ethical terms are not employed to make statements of fact but simply to express certain feelings and evoke certain responses. One of the main causes of moral behaviour is fear, of God's displeasure and of society's disapproval. Any attempt to make ethical concepts the basis of a metaphysical theory concerning the existence of a world of values, as distinct from the world of facts, invloves a false analysis of these concepts. Ethical concepts refers to our feelings of approval or disapproval and ethical judgements are expressions of these feelings and emotions and a desire to arouse similar feelings and emotions in others. This theory is known as the emotive theory of ethics.

Existentialism

Along with other trends in contemporary philosophy, existentialism is a reaction against the traditional ways of thinking. Existentialism as a school of philosophy addresses itself directly to the actual and concrete problems of man — problems of life, suffering and death. Human existence is considered as the supreme object of philosophical enquiry. Existence is construed in its absolutely actual and historical sense and therefore existentialism may be considered as a sharp reaction against the falsification of real human existence by such theories as idealism and naturalism. Existentialists stress the importance of man as an individual and as a responsible being. The aim of philosophy, according to existentialism, is to remove all illusions of man about this world as well as the so-called next life. Man must be made aware of his existence in relation to the material world. Existentialists denounce the ultimate validity of both the material and the transcendental worlds because both are equally illusory. They affirm the value of this life as well as its bitterness. They are extremely sensitive to the nuances of the human condition and wish to make it clear that "frustration, insecurity and painful striving are the inescapable lot of mankind". All existentialists stress the importance of recognising the tragedy inherent in the human condition because this can help us in knowing and realising the values of life. Existentialists believe that suffering and risks in life are essential for a full life of creativity, freedom and self-assertion.

The basic problems discussed by existentialism have existed in all ages, but in traditional philosophy they were either avoided or oversimplified through idealistic or spiritualistic interpretations. It is for the first time in our age that existential philosophers created awareness of these problems. For this reason we can say that existentialism as a distinct intellectual approach came to its full development in our time and can be traced back no further than Kierkegaard, the famous Danish philosopher (1813-1855). On the continent, existentialism has been represented by Gabriel Marcel, Karl Jaspers, Martin Heidegger and Jean-Paul Sartre. Besides these four leading thinkers we may name a few lesser known existentialists like Simone de Beauvoir, Nikolai Berdyaev, Leo Sheshtov, Karl Berth, Louis Lavelle who were also influential in the propagation of existential philosophy.

The philosophy of Soren Kierkegarard was largely ignored during his lifetime. However, he became influential in the twentieth century due to the similarity of his subjectivist thought and the general spirit

of cultural decay prevailing in this century. Kierkegaard and the German philosopher Nietzsche influenced existential thinking through their bold and innovative depiction of existential problems of man. Nietzsche said 'God is dead'. Men must learn to re-examine the human situation in a indispassionate manner, and without depending on transcendental reality. Both Kierkegarrd and Nietzsche were concerned with the actual human situation and rejected abstract and objective systems of philosophy as a distortion of human condition. The existentialist's rejection of traditional philosophy can be best highlighted in terms of their positions vis-a-vis the relative importance of the concepts of essence and existence. In traditional philosophy "essence" was given vital importance and it was supposed to be both eternal and universal, Existence was merely incidental. However, the existentialists reject this view and assert that it is existence which is more important and since existence is linked to history, it can undergo changes and thus, there is no essence.

In Germany the two leading existentialists were Karl Jaspers and Martin Heidegger, but they differed widely in their approach. For Jaspers the aim of philosophy should be to achieve the independence of man as an individual. In his words "Philosophy strives to apprehend eternal truth. Neither man as an individual nor history can apprehend it otherwise than in ephemeral manifestations. As an individual each of us reaches the end of his life without really knowing what is." *(Perennial Scope of Philosophy.)* Jaspers is admired as a great critic of modern civilisation. Besides this, he is a theist and his writings clearly carry impressions of his faith in Christianity. Heidegger is known as a metaphysician and stands close to Kierkegaard and Sartre. Among the French existentialists, the names of Garbriel Marcel and Sartre are most prominent. While Marcel is a convert Catholic, Sartre is a pronounced atheist. Attacking idealism, Marcel argued that by converting things into pure objects idealism lost sight of the presence of things. Objects are not embodiments of an essence but intimately affect our nature by the fact of their existence. Participating in the general existentialist attack on the stereotyping of human being by society, Marcel advanced important ideas about socio-political problems. Sartre has worked within the tradition of French individualism. He emphasizes the absolute freedom of consciousness and the contingency of the human condition in which values and meanings are created only by man and have no independent existence. Sartre's existentialist philosophy finds detailed expression in his

novels and in his famous book *Being and Nothingness*. It is not within our scope to discuss in detail the ideas of each existentialist. Instead we shall broadly discuss the general features of existential philosophy and its humanistic interpretation.

All existentialists have shown concern for the human conditions and for man's quest to lead an authentic existence. They view man as a subject and condemn all attempts to objectify man. The subjectivity of man is constituted of his freedom, responsibility, and finitude. The existenlialists reject the traditional division of man into cognitive, conative and affective parts and assert that it is the organic unity of all these faculties that constitutes man. The classical conception of man as a thinking subject and a pursuer of pure knowledge is rejected by existentialists who assert that it is not knowledge and ideas but actions and feelings that are more important. The existential philosophers in general put forward a tragic view of life and human destiny in which man is doomed to fail in realising his projects because of his finitude. Man cannot escape his finitude and this awareness results in anguish.

Existentialism is humanistic: The existential approach to the problems of human existence is humanistic. Existentialism considers man to be the creator of all values. In the existential analysis of the human condition, values have a crucial role. For existentialism, the identity of man and the core of his being is constituted of his values. These values are created in terms of man's own free will and choice. This does not imply that values are private and not social. Values are born in a social context, but it is the individuals free acceptance and affirmation of values that the existentialists want to emphasize. Further, the individual is free to choose any value, but he is not free not to choose any value. He has to choose some value and be totally responsible for the choice. We may briefly treat the views of three representative existentialists to support the point, viz., Martin Heideggar, Karl Jaspers and Jean Paul Sartre. These represent three different shades of existentialism.

To Martin Heideggar, man is a radically finite being and this finitude is a source of anguish. His description of the world is one in which God is absent. Man, according to him, is thrown in the world. The finitude of man consists in his living and moving within a finite understanding. In spite of Heideggar's attempt to show his concern for the problems of existence, his treatment of man in isolation from the rest of human being has been a point of criticism against him. In

him, we therefore, do not find any explicit enthusiasm for humanism, although humanistic traces are not altogether lacking in his philosophy.

Karl Jaspers is more explicit than Heideggar. He is popularly known as the philosopher of humanity. Philosophy, according to Jaspers, must not deal with phenomena other than those in this world, the world revealed by science. The supreme task of philosophy is to make man realise his true nature because only in this realisation lies the true understanding of his tremendous possibilities. Man to himself is greatest of mysteries and philosophy must help in revealing this mystery to him. Jaspers' treatment of the problem of human existence in relation to the complex world situation is similar to that of any intellectual of our age. Man considers himself the master of this world but is unable to mould the events according to his liking. This terrible sense of impotence has become the cause of immense frustration and mental agony. "How man is to accommodate himself to this and rise superior to it," is, to Jaspers, "One of the most vital questions of the present situation", *(Man in the Modern Age)*. Philosophy must deal with the problems concerning the present condition of mankind in view of it's future possibilities.

Expressing the existential view of man, Jaspers says, "Man is always something more than what he knows of himself. He is not what he is simply once andfor all, but is a process; he is not merely on extent of life, but is, within that life, endowed with possibilities through the freedom he possesses to make himself what he will by the activities on which he decides." He further says, "Man is not a finished life which repeats itself from generation to generation, nor is he a manifest life which plainly reveals itself to him. He breaks through the possibility of perpetually renewed identical circles and is dependent upon his own activity, whereby the process of his life is carried on towards an unknown goal." In the spirit of a humanist Jaspers asserts that since we are men, it is most important for us to know ourselves. "To know what man is, is the only knowledge that is possible for us, for we are men ourselves and that is alone essential — for man is the measure of all things." *(Perennial Scope of Philosophy)*.

According to Jaspers, man's freedom cannot be separated from his consciousness of his finite nature. Jaspers is deeply religious and therefore asserts that in the consciousness of finitude, man is able to understand the transcendence and infinitude. All men are equal

because all are free to attain God. Philosophy serves its true purpose when it is able to establish a faith in man about his potentialities. Even in the world of disastrous future possibilities, Jaspers attempts to open the vista of infinite optimism for man in order that man may overcome his fears; he assures man of his ability to transcend his miserable condition. In this, Jaspers speaks like a true humanist.

The humanism of Jeans Paul Sartre is also very rigorous. According to him man is free to determine himself and therefore there is no need of God. He assigns the place of God to man and thus exalts his position in the world. Sartre denies the existence of God to affirm the freedom of man in determining his life. Thus Sartre's existentialism is consistent atheism on the one hand, and true humanism on the other. According to William Barett, Sartre's atheism "is a basis for humanitarianism and democratic social action. To put man in the place of God may seem to traditionalists an unspeakable piece of diabolism, in Sartre's case it is done by a thinker who, to judge from his writings, is a man of overwhelming goodwill and generosity" *(Irrational Man.)* Sartre calls his existentialism a new humanism and considers man to be the central figure for philosophical inquiry.

Like all existentialists, Sartre is categorical in emphasising the importance of the individual as well as his freedom and responsibility in making himself. In the words of Maurice Crustion, to Sartre, "Precisely because man is free, it follows that he is answerable for everything he is and does. He is not just a cog in a machine, a creature of circumstances or of destiny, a puppet or a robot: he is what he makes himself; and for what he makes himself he alone is responsible." Man is the source of creator of his values. In a lecture entitled *Existentialism and Humanism,* Sartre declared, "Man simply is not that he simply is what he conceives himself after already existing as he wills to be after that leap towards existence. Man is nothing else but that which he makes of himself. That is the first principle of existentialism. Existentialism makes man responsible for his existence. Men are independent, free, isolated and disconnected individuals."

According to Sartre, "an existentialist will never take man as an end, since man is still to be determined, and we have no right to believe that humanity is something to which we could set up a cult. We do not want a humanism like that." Defining his humanism, Sartre says, "there is no Universe except the human Universe, the Universe of human subjectivity. This relation of transcendence is constitutive of man with subjectivity — it is thus we call existential humanism."

He further says that "this is humanism because we remind man that there is no legislator but himself, that he himself thus abandoned, must decide for himself, also because we show that it is not by turning back upon himself, but always by seeking, beyond himself, an aim which is one of liberation or of some particular realisation, that man can realise himself as truly human." In the spirit of a true humanist, Sartre not only talks of man's freedom for himself but also stresses the importance of respecting the freedom of others. There are concrete experiences in which we discover ourselves in community with others. The mere recognition of others' freedom involves the recognition of our own freedom. This point is also explained by Sartre in his book *Being and Nothingness.*

As an existentialist Sartre emphasizes that nothing can save man from the burden of his existence. But this does not means that Sartre wants to plunge man in despair. All he is asserting is that man has to bear the responsibility of his every action and choice. There is no way of escaping this responsibility as there is no way of escaping our freedom and the burden of constantly having to choose, decide and act for ourselves. Existentialism is optimistic as it the doctrine of action. Sartre says, "Life is nothing unless it is lived, but it is yours to make sense that you choose. Therefore, you can see that there is a possibility of creating a human community." Sartre tries to show that his belief in existentialism in its humanistic sense is based on his faith in man's capacity to mould himself and his freedom. "What is at the very heart and centre of existentialism, is the absolute character of the free commitment, by which every man realises himself in realising the type of humanity."

To conclude, existentialists consistently assert that man is free, responsible and capable of determining his destiny. It is this stress upon freedom that has enabled existentialism to provide a common platform to men of different nations and convictions so that they can meet, and discuss human problems of common concern. It is in this sense that Sartre is justified in defining his existentialism as humanism. We may close the discussion with the statement of Professor Barett. He says, "In comparison with traditional philosophy or with other contemporary school of philosophy, existentialism seeks to bring the whole man — the concrete individual in the whole context of his everyday life and in his total mystery and questionableness — into philosophy."

Contemporary Realism

Realism as a common sense approach and the realistic attitude is not a new one in philosophy. It refers to the instinctive belief of man and it is, therefore, as old as man. Realism was revived in the twentieth century only as a reaction against absolute idealism which culminated in the philosophy of F.H. Bradley in England. In his famous book *Appearance and Reality,* Bradley dealt a severe blow to the doctrines of common sense and science by showing the world to be an unreal appearance full of contradictions. The realists assert that the ultimate reality is vested in the particular objects of experience. "Knowledge according to the realists," says Laird, "is always the discovery of something with which the mind is confronted. The mind, therefore, is distinct from its objects."

That the external world is real and is directly revealed to us by means of our senses is one of the most fundamental convictions of man. In line with this belief contemporarily realism maintains the independent existence of the external world. We apprehend this world directly in perception. All the different forms of contemporary realism agree in this basic belief. Contemporary realism begins with G.E. Moore in the beginning of this century. His essay *Refutation of Idealism* generated great interest in philosophers and contributed greatly to the development of realism. However, on the claims of thought and sense, differences developed among the realists. These differences resulted in the growth of different schools of realism in Britain and America. These are known as the empirical realism of the neo-realists like Bertrand Russell and Alexander in England; the new-realism and critical realism of America was represented by Durand Drake, Lovejoy, George Santyana, A.K. Rogers and C.A. Strong to name a few. Thus, contemporary realism flourished mostly in Britain and America. G.E. Moore and Bertrand Russell have been the most articulate and important leaders of realism in Britain and they helped in the founding of realism in America.

Realism is the point of view which holds that external objects are real and exist independently of us. In epistemology, realism holds that in the process of knowledge, objects known remain independent of the existence and influence of the knower. The qualities that are experienced in the objects are an unseparable part of those objects and do not belong to the knower. Our knowledge of objects is direct and perceptual. Realists believe that the same object cannot appear differently to different persons since objects are universal and exist independently of human subjectivity. The basic tenets of realism are in agreement with the fundamental assumptions of the natural sciences.

Since contemporary realism has its beginning in G.E. Moore's criticism of idealism, we may give in brief the main points of that criticism to emphasise the realistic approach in philosophy. Moore's essay 'Refutation of Idealism' exerted a great influence towards the emergence of contemporary realism. Moore lead a revolt of British empiricism and common sense realism against absolute idealism and German transcendentalism. "Everything is what it is and not another thing" was the central principle governing Moore's thinking. The idealist maintains that the subject and the object are necessarily connected because he fails to see that they are distinct. It is under the principle of organic unity that the Hegelian idealist perceives an organic connection between the idea and its object. Moore refutes this and says that the two are distinct and independent of each other. Moore criticises the idealist premise expressed by Berkeley *esse is percipi.* This statement is false because 'to exist' and 'to be perceived' are two distinct terms like green and sweet and are not, therefore, necessarily related to each other. The whole of Berkelian subjective idealism rests on this premise that *esse is percipi* or to be is to be perceived. The existence of an object, according to Moore, is different from the consciousness of it. Moore further says "that to have a mental image of an object is not the same as knowing the existence of an object." The object of my knowledge is not a content of that knowledge. If what we know is not an object outside knowledge, but a content of knowledge, then we cannot assert the independent existence of even knowledge or of the self. Existence of an object therefore is something very distinct from the experience of it. For example things continue to exist even when we don't perceive or experience them. My room and all the objects in my room continue to exist even when I am not in the room or am asleep and am not perceiving. This proves that objects exist independently of my perception.

Emphasising the simple common sense approach of realism, Moore points out that objects and their awareness are two distinct things. The idealist falls into the error of identifying these because it is very difficult to distinguish these two elements of experience and to keep them apart. But Moore says, "The more I look at the objects around me, the more I am unable to resist the conviction that what I see does

exist, as truly and as really, as my perception of it. The conviction is overwhelming. " Moore's refutation of idealism produced both negative and positive results. On the negative side it had a crushing effect on idealism. On the positive side it laid down some of the cardinal principles of modern realism, especially of the neo-realistic type. To put it briefly, Moore showed that the object of every kind of knowledge is independent of that knowledge. In the process of knowing the mind is immediately aware of a content distinct from the object. The object existing is what is known by the mind. Moore lays down the central thesis of neo-realism that the object known is the same as the object existing independently of the knower but the two are not identical. Moore has been consistent in his faith in common sense philosophy and for this reason he is known as the forerunner of contemporary realism which is in tune with the new developments in the field of science.

The British neo-realism is a form of contemporary realism. Besides Moore the other important exponent of it has been Bertrand Russell. Russel is also the most prominent and controversial figure among the contemporary Anglo-Saxon philosophers. As a neo-realist, Russell deals with the question of the external world and sense-perception. The external world for Russell is the world of physics. The objective world is a system of self-existing and interacting entities. Our sense-organs, nerves and brain belong to this system. According to Russell, sensation itself is not knowledge. It becomes knowledge when its image is present. Knowledge is the complex of sensum and image. Russell has used the word sensa for reality. Sensa are the physical effects of the combined causation of things and sense-organs. Sensa are the most certain objects of our knowledge. According to Russell philosophy should be freed from all forms of romanticism and philosophers should clarify the concepts, constructions and methods of the natural sciences. Russell supports pluralism and distinguishes the subject from the object. Russell developed his pluralism into logical atomism — the doctrine that the world consists of sense-data which are bound together by logical relations. Matter is not directly accessible to knowledge in spite of being real; what we know directly are only sense-data.

Russell's views on sense-data have undergone continuous changes of which four stages can be marked. In the first stage, through his book *Problems of Philosophy* Russell says, "Let us give the name sense-data to the things that are immediately known in sensation," sense-data are what are "directly apprehended". A sense-datum is distinguished from sensation. For example, we have a sensation of a colour, but the colour itself is a sense-datum, not a sensation. In his book *Our Knowledge of the External World,* Russell carries his analysis of sensation and physical objects a little further in the light of modern physics. He tries to amend dualism between the sense-data and physical objects by trying to show that the sense-data are not mere appearances of external objects, they really reveal these extra-mental objects. A physical object is conceived as a system of perceptions because to Russell physical objects are not known directly in a single act of perception. The conception of external objects can be obtained by systematic interrelation of different perceptions.

There is a further development in the thinking of Russell which finds manifestation in his book *The Analysis of Mind.* In this book Russell tries to reconstruct his theory of mind in the light of modern physics. With increasing faith in monism, Russell tries to reduce the knower or the subject to a mere fictitious idea of some physical process. The subject appears to him to be a logical fiction like mathematical points and instants. In his book, *An Outline of Philosophy,* Russell draws epistemological conclusions of the physical theory of perception. He came to regard sensation as the end of a long but continuous process which starts from physical object. We are directly aware of our sensation, not the physical object. Since our sensations are in brain, we perceive our brain process." The gist of the matter, Russell says, "is that percepts are in our heads." Regarding perception and the physical world Russell says, "In fact perception gives us the most concrete knowledge we possess as to the stuff of our brains not part of the stuff of tables and chairs, sun, moon and stars. Suppose we are looking at a leaf and we see a green patch — this patch is not out there where the leaf consists in the existence, but in the region occupied by our brain, of a green patch causally connected with the leaf or rather with a series of events emanating from the place in physical space where physics places the leaf." While this statement is symptomatic of the development of his philosophy of sense-data, it also reveals that Russell has not faithfully served the cause of neo-realism. While he does not deny the independent existence of external objects, yet he maintains that from the epistemological point of view, what we know directly are not external objects, but our sensations of them.

Before passing on to American new-realism, we may make a

statement about Moore and Russell as a concluding remark on British neo-realism. Moore and Russell earned their reputation as philosophers due to their refutation of the idealism of F.H. Bradley. Yet the two were very different. While Moore's philosophy is away from the great controversies and issues of our time, Russell's philosophy moves in an atmosphere thick with controversies. Moore is a forceful defender of common sense and is never technical. Russell developed his thinking under the great influence of physics and mathematics. Moore argues that the essence of a thing is always distinct from its relations. Nothing can be constituted by the nature of the system to which it belongs — this is the main point which Moore and Russell urge against Bradley's idealism. Moore further argues that to have a sensation is already to be outside the circle of ideas or sensation; "It is really to know something which is as really and truly not a part of my experience as anything which I can ever know." Moore says that we do not need evidence to prove that there are physical objects since this is something that we know already. In connection with his arguments for the existence of things external, he says, "I can prove now that two human hands exist. By holding up the two hands and saying as I make a certain gesture with the right hand here is one hand and adding as I make a certain gesture with the left hand and here is the other." Thus Moore's arguments are plain and appealing. As against this, Russell belongs in spirit to the tradition of philosophy which conceives it as 'the science of sciences'. Russell expresses his indebtedness to Moore for his lectures published in 1953. He agrees with Moore that what we are immediately acquainted with are sense-data, not physical objects. Although Russell makes certain concessions to common sense but influenced by the sciences, his philosophy moves away from common sense. For him mental states, our own self and sense-data are the only particulars with which we have direct acquaintance. Thus we see that Moore and Russell differ in their method and ultimate objective, although both claim to represent the realistic point of view in philosophy.

American New-realism: New-realism as conceived jointly by six American thinkers, Holt, Marvin, Montague, Perry, Pitkin and Spaulding, is nothing but a return to natural realism which was abandoned previously for its failure to explain dreams and illusions. New realism is primarily a theory concerning the relation between the knowing process and the thing known. The most notable feature of new-realism is the attempt to emancipate metaphysics from epistemology.

According to the new-realists, the nature of things is not to be sought in the nature of knowledge. Things must be studied in an objective way and in their objective setting. New-realism rejects all forms of intellectualism and along with it all mystical philosophies. It depends on the method of analysis and considers nothing as unanalysable or indefinable. New-realism believes in pluralism and rejects metaphysical monism. According to the new-realists all relations are external relations and therefore, it is wrong to believe that knowledge is universally present in all existence.

Rejecting subjectivism, the new-realists hold that cognition or knowing, which is not universal, is generated by certain conditions. In all cases of knowledge, there are the object and the object interrelated in certain ways like any other two objects. There is nothing unique and mysterious in the subject-object relation. New-realism holds that "the content of knowledge that which lies in or before the mind when knowledge takes place, is numerically identical with the thing known." The object known and the object, as it is, are not two entities, according to the new-realism. Analysis and conception reveal reality. The new realist is a platonic realist, in so far as "he accords full ontological status to things of thought as well as to thing of sense, to logical entities as well as to physical entities, or to subsistents as well as existents."

In America itself new-realism has been subjected to criticism for defeating the ultimate purpose of saving realism. Its epistemological monism or pan-objectivism as critics call it, reduces the physical world into a chimera of real and unreal objects. The new-realist replaces the simple common sense view of the physical world by a highly complicated one just to suit his monistic epistemology. Criticism of new-realism mainly came from certain American philosophers known as the critical-realists. Their main problem is the explanation of perception. In every case of perception there are three factors — a physical object, the psychical state, and a datum or the content of the perceiving mind. The datum acts as a mediator between the subject and the physical object. The identity between the perceived object and the physical one is, therefore, denied by the critical-realists. It avoids both subjectivism and objectivism and affirms epistemological dualism.

Contemporary realism, on the whole, is not a metaphysical school. It is a theory of knowledge applied to the problem of external world. It is mainly opposed to subjective idealism. It assumes that reality is

such as can be grasped by our faculties of knowledge. So far as the belief in the reality of external world is concerned, realism appears to be a philosophy beyond any scope of questioning. We live in the age of science. The natural world is subject to rigorous scientific tests and whatever is considered real is thoroughly verified by observation and experimentation. The status of object in relation to subject and the type of relation between the two are such that different opinions could be possible. This was the main point which led to different forms of realism. Realism is opposed to idealism in the sense that it believes in the reality of the external world. Whatever we experience through sense-experience must be accepted as real. This is the simplest expression of realistic thesis and no realist, whether traditionalist or contemporary, would deny this view.

Humanism

Humanism is not a contemporary school of philosophy but a point of view which is attracting the attention of intellectuals all over the world. Geographical, economic, political and religious factors not only divide people but have brought them face-to-face with each other in a situation of conflict and competition. But human nature remains the same everywhere, seeking peace, security and happiness. The question naturally arises, what is the most suitable philosophy for our age? Which point of view and approach to life can elevate man from the present situation of insecurity and uncertainty? The answer lies in the philosophy of humanism and the humanistic point of view.

In the wake of rapid scientific development and ever-growing mechanised life, man is slowly becoming alienated from his own true self. He has become alienated from nature, from others and the possibility of all-round spiritual development has become more and more remote. The real tragedy of our time lies not so much in the unprecedented external events as in the loss of confidence in men. There is very serious crisis of confidence. As Paul Brunton says, "Many who once believed that there was a movement in the destiny of mankind leading upward to the good now believe that it is leading downward to the evil." The chief aim of philosophy today should be to restore confidence in man, to help him in knowing his true nature and potentialities. This will be possible only through a humanistic interpretation of art, science, religion and philosophy. Science and technology must be pursued and allowed to grow strictly in the human context otherwise their very purpose would be defeated.

What is Humanism?: In its primary connotation humanism means simply human-being-ism, that is, devotion to the interests of human beings. Humanism is a point of view which asserts that men have only one life and they should make most of it in terms of creative work in order to increase their happiness. Humanism expects us to recognise man not merely as a biological entity but primarily as a creative, cultural and spiritual being. Humanism demands that our approach to all problems should be inspired by a true sense of justice and com-passion. The spirit of humanism recognises human freedom, tolerance, respect for truth, personal dignity, recognition of humanity in other men and justice for all men alike irrespective of caste, creed and sex. The standards which humanism sets for men are earthly based on utilitarian ideal. This is particularly important today because there is no escape from the danger of ideological conflicts unless we are prepared to stop thinking politically as capitalists or communists, religiously as Christians, Muslims, Hindus etc., and think as humanists.

Humanism as a philosophical attitude is of tremendous significance in our age. It logically develops into the belief that human life is the source and measure of all values. Humanism is a philosophy which gives the central place to man and the nature of the human condition. It represents a specific and forthright view of the universe, the nature of man and the treatment of human problems. It offers concrete guidelines for the solution of human problems and not merely abstract notions. As Professor Schiller says, "Humanism in philosophy is opposed to Nauralism and Absolutism; it designates the philosophic attitude which regards the interpretation of human experience as the primary concern of all philosophising, and asserts the adequacy of human knowledge for this purpose." It believes more in the here-and-how (life in this world) rather than the hereafter (life in the next world).

Humanism, placing the fate of men within the very broad limits of the natural world, casts aside the misleading supernaturalism of the past and proclaims the ideal of service for the cause of humanity. It believes that only by a natural growth and action that the individual can freely and effectively universalise and realise his being. Humanism is not a religion but a philosophy because it is wrong to call human activity as religious unless some appeal to supernatural elements is involved in it. On the other hand, as Dr. Radhakrishnan says, "Humanism is a legitimate protest against those

forms of religion which separate secular and sacred, divide time and eternity and break up the unity of the soul and flesh." Thus, humanism centres its attention on man instead of supernatural phenomena. As for as man, he is the same as far as his essential nature is concerned, otherwise we cannot talk of universality of man.

Humanism as a general attitude to life is very old. But it became a systematic philosophical viewpoint only during the onset of the age known as the Renaissance in the history of Europe. The Renaissance was an intellectual reaction against the authoritarianism and supernaturalism of the Middle Ages. In spite of the fact that Christianity preached universal brotherhood, the basic conception of the medieval church that man must surrender to sufferings which are meted out by God, that ignorance was pardonable, that pleasure was sinful, vitiated it as a religion. In a poor and ignorant society mainly composed of soldiers, priests and farmers, the Commandments of Pope, the supreme guardian of religion, found ready acceptance. It was the age of faith and dogma against reason.

The Renaissance or rebirth is a term applied to a great intellectual awakening which affected all phases of European life and history during the latter part the Middle Age. The renaissance marked "the emergence of the new attitude towards life, of the new conception of man." As T.E. Hulme says, "In this period not only has its philosophy, its literature and ethics been based on this new conception of man as fundamentally good, as sufficient as the measure of things, but a good case can even be made out for regarding many of its characteristic economic features as springing entirely from this central abstract conception." The Renaissance or the spirit of new awakening manifested itself in may ways through art, literature and philosophy. Literary and artistic trends which accompanied the decline of medievalism unfolded the new period of humanistic philosophy. A religion widely held and strongly entrenched in the social and political tradition of Europe was challanged by the new spiritual forces. As a result, the totalitarian conception of social order gradually lost its colour. "Views of life based upon freedom of thought, upon the rights of the individual conscience, upon the self-determination of states and even of small religious sects, corrode the ancient fabric of the all embracing church and give rise to the trains of revolutionary thought which in the end transform the institutions of Europe and shape the life of the modern world." (*History of Europe* — H.A.L. Fisher) Thus, the Renaissance must be considered as the great epoch in the

humanist tradition, not because of its scepticism and general trend of atheism, but because men started believing in their own potentialities and realised that knowledge, art, moral, society were all human inventions designed for the enrichment of human life.

Humanism is a term generally applied to the predominant social philosophy and intellectual and literary currents of the period from 1400 A.D. to 1650 A.D. The period is characterised by the general emancipation of the individual. It will not be wrong to say that it was during the humanist era of the Renaissance that the freedom of individual expression and opposition to authority was strongly advocated for the first time in the history of Western Europe. The new era of humanism started with the lead from Italy and the movement gradually spread towards the north Italy which enjoyed favourable climate in the form of commercial prosperity, political freedom and considerable intellectual growth, which ultimately helped her to take a lead in general emancipation over the rest of Europe. Men like Marsilius of Padva, advocated that the state must be under the direct control of the people and the Pope must surrender his powers to the people. This demand was also made in other parts of Europe and resulted in the religious revolution commonly called the Reformation.

Humanist philosophy which found its real origin in Protagoras and Socrates continued to flow through the period of Renaissance with great vigour. From sixteenth century to the end of nineteenth century humanism remained an influential creed throughout the Europe. With the expansion of intellectual influences in Europe and with the growing spirit of tolerance, the narrow provincialism of the Medieval Age gradually faded away. Humanism produced a secular outlook, more concerned with things of this world than life hereafter. With the beginning of the Modern Age we find that several spheres of human interest including science and philosophy were infused with humanistic outlook. From Giordano Bruno and Mantaigne down to Hume, all philosophers in one way or other have worked for human betterment through a new rational outlook on problems concerning the world. Natural scientists of this period helped in the realisation of human potentialities through new discoveries. Among the philosophers, Francis Bacon and Rene Descartes were influential in weaning away their generation from ancient traditions and dogmas. Baruch Spinoza brought man within the scope of natural laws. He emphasised man's importance by saying that man is one of the forms in which God manifests Himself. Leibnitz emphasized the possibility of human

perfection. His dictum: "This is the best of all possible worlds," had great significance in the light of humanism. In the sphere of education, an attempt was made to promote the ideal of free development of human personality. The real revolution in educational thought was brought by Jean Jacques Rousseau during the middle of the eighteenth century. In his famous book *Emile*, he made a bold attempt to democratise the educational process. In the words of Professor Fisher, "Rousseau's social contract worked like an enchantment. It was brief, eloquent talking. The opening sentence, 'Man is born free but is everywhere in chains', gives a challenge to civilisation."

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in Europe, the concept of human progress got special impetus. "The growing aspiration to improve mankind by the application of science was probably the chief influence which helped to shift the interest of many European thinkers from the kingdom of God to the kingdom of man." The humanitarian movement in the eighteenth century strongly encouraged thinkers of the period to formulate plans of a better social order. To conclude, in the words of Dr. Fisher, "If the philosophers had lost their belief in the doctrine of the churches, they had acquired a faith in the dignity and perfectability of man. A large number of intelligent people believed that if only the rubbish of the Gothic ages could be swept away with a strong broom, man, whose nature was good and susceptible of infinite improvement, would march from strength to strength. Nobody was disposed to place limits upon the power of legislation to improve human nature indefinitely."

Humanism emerged as an important historical force in the nineteenth century. Its immediate source was the already prevalent idea of enlightenment. The idea of human progress further developed in the light of advances in the field of natural and social sciences. Because of rapid advances in the field of science resulting in one discovery after another, social life has changed more in the last hundred years than in all the previous centuries of western civilisation. The progressive governments of the nineteenth century promoted the ideas of popular education and equality of opportunity. This resulted in the evolution of humanity towards unity and greater realisation of humanistic ideals. The nineteenth century also marked the triumph of the concept of evolution. It completely revolutionised human perspective. It implied that for all practical purposes "man is the measure of all things." The growth of science helped in revealing the enormous power of man. In the sphere of religion, its net result was further

refutation of dogma and supernaturalism. The orthodox ideas of God and Jesus were rejected by two important humanistic cults, who proposed instead a religious system devoted to the worship of humanity. This was supported by John Stuart Mill and other utilitarians. The other was advocated by the Ethical Culture Society founded by Falix Adler in New York city in 1876. It insisted upon regarding Jesus as a strictly human teacher and recognised his contribution to our moral tradition.

The most important task before the human race is to free itself from the horrifying possibility of nuclear war. The only rational approach is to acquire greater understanding of ourselves and greater trust between different nations. Man has acquired tremendous control over Nature. But this is not enough since unless he conquers himself, he cannot contribute to the preservation of humanity and to the promotion of peace and happiness among people. Thus there are only two alternatives before man: either to form a world society based on common interests and mutual understanding or to perish. To give preference to the former alternative, a humanist culture has to be promoted. A genuine humanist philosophy must be accepted by all nations of the world as the basis of political ideologies and economic programmes. It means religion, caste and colour should not be allowed to come in the way of man in courting friendship with man. In spite of all advancements in the field of social sciences, what is happening today is not befitting human dignity. The present situation is well explained by Dr. G.C. Pandey when he says, "Even in the age of worldwide human contact, racial and national prejudices continue with little abatement. Despite the growth of an unprecedented feeling of compassion for the lowly and the down-trodden, there is an actual increase in the intensity and scale of violence and conflicts. If human dignity has asserted itself, humanity has declined. A greater satisfaction of rights lends to eclipse the notion of disinterested duty, and quest of social security has replaced that for self- regeneration. The modern man is thirsty with water all around."*

To save man from catastrophe humanism has to be accepted as a present-day philosophy. On the basis of humanism the future state of humanity rests on three necessary conditions: Elimination of present inequality between nations; the promotion of equality and justice within one and the same nation; and finally, the attempt at all-round

* *On Ethical Notions* — G.C.Pandey

perfection of mankind. Real progress of the human race means "equality of material comfort and security of livelihood, as well as moral and intellectual perfection, universal peace and political liberty." Philosophy must deal with concrete facts and must provide a common platform to mankind. Philosophers must cease to discuss abstract and transcendental issues on the one hand and purely material progress on the other. The middle course between transcendentalism and materialism can furnish some hopes to the human race of survival as well as progress. The doctrines of humanism become very important in this connection. Peace, security and progress are possible only if humanistic ideals dominate political ideologies, economic planning and international relations.

Contemporary Indian Philosophy

It is said that when Alexander the Great made up his mind to march towards India with the aim of conquering her, he called his teacher Aristotle to enquire as to what he could possibly bring from India as a gift for him. Aristotle immediately said, "Bring a few naked philosophers. I will discuss with them philosophical problems." This shows that India was known for a rich philosophical tradition even in the ancient times. Philosophy has been a part of our cultural heritage unlike the western world where it was confined to only professional philosophers and religious teachers. It is precisely for this reason that in India even illiterate laymen are often heard discussing basic philosophical issues like origin of this world, aim of life and human destiny, existence of God and immortality of soul. Indians live in a culture which is tempered with philosophical spirit and attitude.

About the origin of philosophical thinking in India nothing can be said definitely. The four *Vedas* are known as the fountainhead of Indian culture, religion and philosophy. No authentic date about the composition and compilation of the *Vedas* is available. Similarly scholars generally agree that the *Upanishads*, the two great epics and the *Bhagvad Gita* were written hundreds of years before the dawn of New Era. Nothing is definitely said about the first Jain *Tirthankara* and we do not know when the *sutras* of the six Indian philosophical systems were written. All this is sufficient to prove that the tradition of philosophy in India is thousands of years old. It was not only preserved with care from generation to generation but was also nourished through interpretations, expositions and explanations by philosophers and saints during the last three thousand years of which

authentic historical record is available. In this process several philosophers from Lord Mahavira, the Buddha and Sankara, down to Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo have made very rich contributions to preserve the highest traditions of culture, religion and philosophy. Since we have already discussed the traditional schools of Indian philosophy, we shall now discuss in brief contemporary Indian philosophy.

Indian history from the beginning of 8th century to the 19th century has been the period of political and social crisis due to repeated foreign invasions and the consequent occupation of the country and subjugation of the people. It was also a period of cultural and religious invasion from outside with the aim of destroying the native cultural values, religious foundations and philosophical traditions. India lived in turmoil for nearly eleven hundred years due to occasional wars, infighting among small princely kingdoms and an attempt to transplant alien culture on the native soil. Due to such difficult conditions, creative activity of the Indian mind suffered a great deal. Consistent efforts to destroy the ancient Indian literature and centres of religious and philosophical teachings could not succeed, though considerable damage was done. Attempts to evolve a mixed culture by some foreign rulers also proved futile. However, the Indian mind assimilated the good points of alien cultures. Religious and social leaders worked for the propagation of the ideals of love, non-violence, religious tolerance and universal brotherhood. The highest tradition of sainthood and *sufism* was established by men like Ramananda, Kabir, Tulsidas, Nanak, Baba Farid, Bulla Shah and a host of others.

The foundation of contemporary Indian philosophy is based on such a rich religious and philosophical tradition. In ninteenth century the intellectuals of India felt the need of evolving a new outlook and a new approach in order to preserve the cultural and philosophical tradition and to draw advantage from advances in the field of science. The positive attitude of contemporary Indian thinkers have been deeply influenced by three factors, i.e., the ancient Indian religion and philosophy; the medieval ideas of universal brotherhood and mutual tolerance; and the western scientific outlook and liberalism. Under the combined impact of these factors, a new phase of intellectual activity began in India.

We may discuss some of the important features of philosophical analysis during the contemporary period. In all contemporary Indian philosophers we notice a keen desire to retain the rich ancient Indian

tradition along with the assimilation of the good ideas of the West. As a result of this, contemporary philosophy is characterised by a synthesis between spiritualism and empiricism. It means the Indian mind recognises the ultimate supremacy of spiritual values. But this recognition is not at the cost of a modern scientific and empirical outlook. Philosophy takes the reality of this world and also the physical existence of man showing an empirical and a matter of fact attitude towards life and the world. Professing optlmism instead of escapism and pessimism, Indian philosophers have generally appreciated the western idea of evolution. They have only added a spiritual interpretation of evolution in order to make it more comprehensive. Evolution has been interpreted as the process of spiritual growth towards the greater perfection of man.

The concepts of *karma*, rebirth, immortality and salvation have also stimulated the contemporary Indian mind. Philosophers generally agree that the problems of traditional philosophy are still relevant. But they have to be looked at from a new perspective. *Karma* or action is inseparably bound with human life. Man must get involved in vigorous activity for his own perfection and for the good of the human race. The concept of salvation is viewed from a new point of view. Man is capable of attaining salvation in this life. Sri Aurobindo has formulated the ideal of divine life, and Mahatma Gandhi has put forth the concept of Sarvamukti or Sarvodaya. This is altogether a new concept in contemporary Indian philosophy. In the light of this, we can say that contemporary Indian philosophy is characterised by broadmindedness and a desire of promoting humanitarian ideals.

The cotemporary Indian philosophers are humanists as they have given utmost importance to the recognition of human dignity and human freedom. With faith in the reality of this world, contemporary philosophers launched a vigorous campaign for acceptance of human values of freedom, justice, truth, non-violence and universal peace. For this reason, the democratic ideals of the West were greatly appreciated. There has been greater stress on the need of improvement of social life on the basis of principles of democracy and socialism. We can say that in this century India has produced social philosophers rather than metaphysicians. In contemporary philosophy we find a kind of synthesis between humanism and spiritualism. It is generally exhorted that humanism must be accepted as the Dharma. It can be said that humanistic philosophy of contemporary philosophers is the most important contribution of India to world thought.

Twentieth-century Indian philosophy is often characterised as interpretative and not original. This is only partly true. Creativity and interpretation always go together, although the ancient Indian period was more creative and the contemporary Indian period is more interpretative. In fact there is no area of philosophy which our ancient sages did not cover. Consequently philosophers since Sankara have been more engaged in exposition and interpretation of concepts for the benefit of the common man. But this should not create an impression that there is no originality in the contemporary thinkers. There is a lot of originality in the presentation of Advaita Vedanta by Swami Vivekananda, in the 'religion of man' by Tagore, in the concept of Sarvodaya by Gandhi, and in the ideal of divine life by Sri Aurobindo. When times change, values also change. Reinterpretation of old ideals and concepts in the context of a changed situation becomes a necessity, and therefore, interpretations go side by side with original ideas. In fact there is nothing like pure originality or pure interpretation. Sankara interpreted *Brahma-Sutras* and to that extent he was also an interpreter. But nobody can deny the originality of Sankara's philosophy. The same is the case with Sri Aurobindo in this century.

We now come to a general account of the ideas of some representative thinkers. The discussion will be confined to the views of Swami Vivekananda, Rabindranath Tagore, Gandhi, Sri Aurobindo and S. Radhakrishnan. Vivekananda represents neo-Vedantic philosophy and has influenced profoundly contemporary thinking. Tagore and Gandhi represent new social thinking and contributed through their ideas and work. Sri Aurobindo interpreted the western concept of evolution in the light of Indian spiritualism. Radhakrishnan is important because of his ideas and scholarship.

Vivekananda

Swami Vivekananda was an idealist since he asserted that the real was spiritual in character. Among the contemporary philosophers he can easily be termed as a neo-Vedantist as he expressed views in favour of monism, monotheism and pantheism. Unfortunately in the writings of Vivekananda we do not find a systematic development of views on different problem. Ideas on different subjects are scattered. The most characteristic feature of his philosophy is that two currents flow side by side one of the Advaita Vedanta and the other of the Bhakti cult. As a Vedantin, Vivekananda viewed reality as Absolute Brahman described in terms of *sat-chit-ananda*, although it is above

time and space and has no attributes. The world according to him is the expression of the Absolute. Unlike Sankara, Vivekananda recognised the reality of the world. The word *maya* is used by him to explain the inherent contradictions in the world. The true nature of man is represented by the spirit (the Atman). Man is soul-force. Every man represents certain urges and aspirations through an organised unity of the physical and the spiritual. Under the influence of the Bhakti cult, Vivekananda expressed the view that religious urges and aspirations of an average man could not find proper satisfaction in the transcendental view of reality. For this man requires a personal God. However, God and Brahman are not two realities. Brahman viewed from the religious point of view is God. According to Vivekananda, while we accept reality of the world and the soul, we cannot reject God.

Unlike Sankara, Vivekananda had firm faith in the existence of God. He has given proofs for the existence of God. These are similar to those offered by some western philosophers. Supporting teleological and causal proofs, Vivekananda attributed unity and harmony in the world to God.

Swami Vivekananda represented the highest tradition of religion and philosophy in the contemporary period. He presented with great lucidity his views on religion and its associated problems at the Chicago Parliament of World Religions in 1893. Therefore, it would be fruitful to mention in brief his views on religion. He took religion as a necessity of life and asserted that it was the most potent force guiding the destiny of human race from the beginning of civilisation. Man needs religion as nothing else gives him complete satisfaction. Explaining the meaning of religion, Vivekananda said it was an attempt to transcend the limitations imposed by the senses. Religion is awakening of the spirit in man. It has two aspects — external and internal. The external aspect consisting of worship and observance of other formalities has its value. But the essence of religion finds expression in its inner aspects which contribute to the growth of human personality from within.

Vivekananda distinguished between institutional religion and true religion. Institutional religion sets conditions and limitations on its followers. Hence, religions of the world appear to be different. But true religion is the expression of love for all. Besides this in every religion there are aspects of rituals, mythology and philosophy. Religions differ due to different rituals and mythological backgrounds.

The philosophical aspects of every religion represent the basic principles which are common to all religions. Swami Vivekananda asked men of all religions to unite on the basis of essential common principles. Over and above this, he put forward the idea of universal religion which rose above all limitations and divisions. On account of external differences we do not notice the universal in religion. A deeper insight into the essentials of all religions reveals that the differences are only superficial and not fundamental. With the spirit of tolerance, Vivekananda called upon men of all religions to develop an attitude of understanding, open-heartedness, tolerance, mutual respect and broad-mindedness. God is one and He is truth. In his own words, "Religion is realisation, not talk, nor doctrine, nor theories — it is being and becoming, not hearing or acknowledging; it is whole soul becoming changed into what it believes" *(Complete Works,* p. 432 Vol. V).

Swami Vivekananda was secular in his outlook and philosophy. His attitude towards other religions is best expressed in his own words: "I accept all religions that were in the past, and worship with them all; I worship God with everyone of them, in whatever form they worship Him." According to him, in enlightened religious understanding there could be no possibility of religious clashes. His conception of universal religion was based on the belief that God manifests Himself through all living beings. Vivekananda often used to say, "If you want to find God, serve man." He expressed his desire to be born again and suffer thousands of miseries so that he could worship the only God, the sum total of all souls. This is not only the highest expression of religion but also the clearest statement of humanism.

Vivekananda assumed the role of a world teacher and a spiritual guide. His views on society and its progressive evolution were more realistic and pragmatic then any other contemporary philosopher. He presented a very balanced view both for society and the individual. In a perfect society, there must be a proper harmony between man and man and the aim should be synthesis between spiritualism and materialism. In individual life there must be a balance between the higher and the lower nature of man, the spirit and body. Vivekananda was no abstract philosopher and was greatly concerned with the material well-being of humanity. He was a realist, a rationa-list and a spiritualist and presented an extremely rich body of thought for the betterment of humanity.

Tagore
Rabindranath Tagore's philosophy was the outcome of his personal realisation and vision instead of any study or knowledge. It is the ancient wisdom meeting the demands of the present age. Like Swami Vivekananda, we do not find in Tagore a systematic exposition of his philosophical views. In fact it is difficult to call him a philosopher in the traditional sense. Tagore's views are included in contemporary Indian philosophy because he has expressed his ideas on the nature of reality, creation, man and religion. Tagore's philosophy finds expression in his literary writings consisting of poetry, novels and essays.

In his metaphysical views, Tagore appears to be a monist and a theist. Although he talks of formless reality, yet under the impact of theism God is described as the ultimate reality. God for him is supreme person, the supreme spirit, the infinite personality. There is only one reality and it is the basis of everything we perceive and experience. Tagore was so great a believer in the reality of God that he attempted to give proofs for His existence. He perceived a great teleology working behind the harmony and beauty of Nature. Wholeness of the world and unity in variety proves that there is a divine force working everywhere. There is a joy inherent in every aspect of creation and God must be presupposed as an object of love, hope and aspirations of man. Tagore also believed in the reality of creation since for him creation was an expression of God. Tagore described creation as the *Lila* (play) of the creator. As for the relation between God and the world, Tagore said, 'God is everything but everything is not God', since there are degrees of reality.

Tagore is generally described as the philosopher of humanity. His views on the nature of man and his concern for the peace and happiness of mankind is the most important part of his philosophy. Man is a creature of this world, yet he is like God because man combines in himself biological and spiritual nature. Man owes his biological and physical nature to evolution but the spiritual dimension makes him unique among the living species. Tagore has described these two aspects of man as finite and infinite. As for his finite nature, man has common qualities with animals. But he distinguishes himself from other animals due to reason and his manifest desire to improve. The infinite nature of man is the expression of universal in him, it is a manifestation of Divinity. On account of his infinite nature, man seeks perfection, liberation and immortality. According to Tagore, it

is due to infinite nature that man feels his kinship with Nature and is a creative being. Lastly, expressions of joy, the urge for truth, goodness and beauty and human freedom also prove the infinite aspect in human personality. Tagore has called man *Jivan Devata*.

For developing his views on religion, Tagore travelled through orthodox Hinduism and Brahma Samaj, finally landing on the religion of man. For him true religion must help in the realisation of one's kinship with everything which makes Nature. Denouncing escapism and ascetism in the name of religion, Tagore emphasised that religion must be lived. Like Vivekananda he considered institutional religion as dogmatic and misleading. There cannot be any compulsion in true religion. Religion consists of man's capacity for self-transcendence. Real religious life consists of love, sacrifice, sincerity, innocence; it is self-denial for self-realisation.

Religion, according to Tagore, consisted in the synthesis and reconciliation of the contradictions in human nature, in the subordination of brute nature to what we consider truth in man. "Religion consists in the endeavour of men to cultivate and express those qualities which are inherent in the nature of Man the Eternal and to have faith in him" *(The Religion of Man* p. 89, 1961). According to Tagore, religion of man consisted in the realisation that man was the ultimate truth and measure of all things. In Tagore's religion man is as necessary to God as God is necessary to man. "Humanity is necessary factor in the perfecting of the Divine truth" *(Creative Unity* p. 80). Tagore declared, "My religion is the religion of Man in which the infinite is defined in humanity." As to the relation between God and man, Tagore gave humanity a variety of roles. Sometimes man is considered as the art-work of God, sometimes co-worker with God; sometimes a friend and a playmate.

Rabindranath may be considered as a remarkable link between the ancient wisdom and the contemporary civilisation characterised by a scientific spirit. He was influenced by the Upanishadic principle of the unity of all life. He particularly emphasised two points of ancient Indian philosophy and culture viz., human solidarity and supermacy of spiritual values. Tagore's special contribution is his humanistic interpretation of the ancient Indian religion and philosophy. Throughout the phases of his spiritual growth, Tagore tried to show that a downright mortification of the flesh has never been advocated in the Indian tradition. Through his poems and plays a healthy corrective is provided to asceticism by an active life. It is remarkable that in spite

of being a poet and an artist, Tagore expressed his view on important philosophical issues and manifested great originality of ideas. For this reason he stands prominently among the contemporary Indian thinkers.

Gandhi

Mahatma Gandhi was not a metaphysician, nor did he exhibit any interest in logical and epistemological problems. He was a social philosopher and essentially a man of religion. With his theistic conviction, Gandhi expressed his deep faith in the reality of God. God is a matter of inner realisation and faith and not logical proof. For Gandhi there could be no difference between God and truth. A man who follows the path of truth and adheres to it in thought and actions is the greatest believer in God. Gandhi asked men to understand their true nature which consisted of spirit, conscience, reason, emotion, will and sensibility. The physical and spiritual aspects of man are the expressions of God.

Gandhi was a practical idealist. As an idealist he had deep faith in the essential goodness of man. Man is basically a spiritual being and has capacity to conquer the forces which pull him down to the lower level of animals. He was a practical man and therefore, undertook the task of social transformation of Indian society through vigorous action. Gandhi's practical idealism led him to adopt the path of non-violence in solving all problems, religious, social, political and economic. The principle of non-violence is characteristic of Indian religion and culture, and found great supporters like Lord Buddha and Jain Mahavira. It was laid down as the highest form of religious expression in the great Indian epic, the *Mahabharata (Ahimsa Parmo Dharma.)* Gandhi's most significant contribution is that he gave a positive interpretation of non-violence. Gandhi said non-violence and love were identical. He considered love as the greatest force which could be used in solving all our problems. Gandhi said, "Non-violence is the greatest force at the disposal of mankind. It is the mightiest weapon of destruction desired by ingenuity of man. Destruction is not the law of the humans. Man lives freely by his readiness to die, if it need be at the hands of his brother, never by killing him" *(The Mind of Mahatma Gandhi* compiled by R.K. Prabhu p. 49, 1945). For using the weapon of non-violence, Gandhi advocated the method of satyagraha (insistence on truth).

Gandhi never preached an ideal which he himself did not practise. With deep faith in God which he identified with truth, Gandhi used satyagraha as a method in dealing with social, political and economic problems. Satyagraha is based on the conviction that through love and non-violence, evil forces can be neutralised. Gandhi successfully used satyagraha and prescribed it as the most powerful weapon for fighting against wrong persons and wrong systems. For a man who opts for this method, Gandhi prescribed love, sincerity, fearlessness, discipline and the capacity to suffer as the basic conditions. Gandhi believed that satyagraha was one method but it could be differently used in different situations. Thus, twelve kinds of satyagraha were put forward of which non-cooperation, civil disobedience, negotiation, direct action, fasting and economic boycott were the most prominent.

Gandhi also dealt with the relationship between ends and means. Gandhi said that means and ends were inseparable concepts. However, he said the end could not justify the means. For realising a good end, any means cannot be adopted; the means must also be good. Purity of means is essential for realising good ends. A wrong means adversely affects the work and the end. The philosophy of end and means is directly related with Gandhi's views on truth and non-violence. Throughout his relentless struggle against injustice, Gandhi stood steadfast in his conviction that for a noble ideal only good means could be adopted. He rejected the idea of violent revolution for establishing a classless society. Violence breeds hatred and it cannot serve any good purpose.

Gandhi wanted to make religion the foundation of his social and economic philosophy because for him there was no difference between religion and morality. Religion is the expression of the permanent nature of man. It has the quality of purifying and elevating human nature. Religion has the power of creating spiritual restlessness which consequently helps in cultivating the sense of good and right. There is no religion higher than truth and righteousness. Gandhi was of the view that religion could become the basis of friendship among all mankind. He subscribed to the creed of equal regard for all religious faiths — *Sarvadharma Samanatva.* Gandhi's faith in God was like that of an Advaitin. But at the same time he called himself an *anekantavadin* or 'believer in the relativity of reality'. The different notions of reality helped him in correctly judging different religions.

Gandhi's religious and social philosophy was very comprehensive since it included in its fold all aspects of individual and social life. For a complete social transformation, he advocated the ideal of Sarvodaya — upliftment of all, regardless of caste, creed and sex. His

political philosophy of Swarajya as Ramrajya, economic philosophy of cottage industries and swadeshi and educational philosophy of basic education show that Gandhi viewed things in totality unlike academic thinkers. Due to his synthesis of the ideal and the practical, Gandhi appears to be the tallest among the contemporary Indian philosophers. Gandhi was also a man of history and stood in rank with great men like Socrates, Mahavira and Buddha. That is why Albert Einstein said that the future generations would hardly believe that a man like Gandhi ever walked on the face of earth. Such tribute has hardly ever been paid to any philosopher.

Sri Aurobindo

Sri Aurobindo, the great sage of Pondicherry, is relatively less known as compared to Swami Vivekananda, Tagore and Gandhi. It is because for most of his life, with the exception of a revolutionary career of hardly fifteen years, Sri Aurobindo lived at an isolated place in Pondicherry. The forty years period of Sri Aurobindo at Pondicherry was spent in intellectual and spiritual pursuit, in giving a new hope for the possibility of Divine life on Earth through conscious human efforts and determination. Due to his very original thinking and very high intellectual calibre, Sri Aurobindo has made an extremely important contribution to contemporary philosophy.

The philosophical point of view of Sri Aurobindo has been described by Prof. Haridas Choudhary as "integral non-dualism". As an idealist of the ancient Indian type, Sri Aurobindo refused to accept the materialist view of reality and rejected any ascetic approach for knowing the real. Sri Aurobindo's view of reality may be described as a synthesis of materialism and spiritualism since for him reality always contained two aspects. Reality is supremely spiritual yet matter has been assigned a place in it. There is only one Reality, one Truth. This truth must be perceived behind all dualities and all contradictions. It is Brahman, the omnipresent Reality. The Brahman of Sri Aurobindo, "is the absolute, it has no needs, no desires, has no deficiency, but it has the potentiality for creating names and forms. It is absolutely free, not even 'bound by his own freedom not to create'. Brahman is Sachidananda, existence, consciousness and bliss" *(Contemporary India Philosophy:* T.P.M. Mahadevan, p. 165). In order to grasp the Absolute, it is necessary that we start with a firm faith in the omnipresent Reality. The spiritual journey, the way of human apprehension has to start from faith which has to be developed into knowledge and finally knowledge has to be developed into

perfect experience. Reality is one but creation depends upon the twin principles of unity and multiplicity. The essential unity of reality finds expression in manifoldness. That is why Sri Aurobindo said that Reality represented three principles of existence, consciousness and bliss.

The entire philosophy of Sri Aurobindo revolves round an integrated theory of evolution. His special contribution is that he attempted a synthesis of eastern and western theories of evolution preserving the essential elements of both. Aurobindo's spiritual philosophy of evolution rests on the belief that "spirit is the source of creation and evolution, and also the final end of realisation." Evolution does not mean growing from the lower grades to the higher ones — superseding and rejecting the lower as they are crossed. On the contrary, evolution implies that the lower ones are uplifted and transformed. Evolution as Sri Aurobindo sees it, is "an unfolding of the divine potentialities inherent in matter from the most obscure and insentient beginnings to a well-flowering and luminous consummation in spirit" *(Founding of the Life Divine*: M. Dounelly, p. 46). Spirit cannot evolve unless it is already present in it. The movement of the spirit in its unfolding in the manifested universe of matter is the core of Sri Aurobindo's theory of evolution. The lower forms can rise to the higher as the higher is already present in the lower. Evolution cannot proceed out of nothing. There are eight principles which explain the process of evolution; these are existence, consciousness, force, bliss, supermind, mind, psyche, life and matter. The first four belong to the higher realm and the latter four to the lower. The lower realm represents the stages that evolution has been able to reach; the higher realm seeks to represent the stages into which evolution is going to enter. These are not opposed to each other. In the words of Sri Aurobindo, "We ascend from matter through a developing life, soul and mind towards the divine being" *(Life Divine*, p. 243).

Explaining the nature of creation, Sri Aurobindo said that it was a double process of descent and ascent, descent of the spirit into the worldly forms and also ascent of the worldly forms into its original status. Thus, spiritual regeneration would presuppose that the ideal can be reached since it is a part of our nature, and also that there has been descent of the spirit into the world. Descent of the spirit is nothing but the origin of creation, and spiritual transformation presuppose it. Creation is a double process of involution and evolution according to Sri Aurobindo. Creation is a process by which *Sacchidananda*

brahman turns Himself into the phenomenal world.

While explaining the nature of reality and the process of evolution, Sri Aurobindo suggested that on the one hand there was *Sacchidananda* belonging to the higher sphere of reality and matter, life psyche and mind belonging to the lower sphere. Evolution has reached the stage of mind and is preparing to take a leap into the higher sphere. The transformation of the lower into the higher would take place with the help of a mediating link called supermind. Explaining the nature of supermind, Sri Aurobindo gave very original ideas. Supermind is similar in nature to *Sacchidananda* yet it is not opposed to mind. Supermind is the ideal of mind but belongs to the higher sphere of reality. Mind represents a fall of the supermind has the prospect of evolution to the higher level. The concept of supermind strikes a new hope for man in his evolutionary progress when he would rise above his individuality to grasp the unity of life. The spiritual aim of evolution is an integral unfolding of the divine within us, a complete evolution of the hidden divinity in the individual soul and the collective life. Sri Aurobindo set before mankind the ideal of the divine life, the spirit fulfilled on earth as the ultimate aim to be realised.

Sri Aurobindo's theory of spiritual evolution is closely related to his concept of integral yoga. In his scheme of spiritual evolution each man has to grow into the Divine within himself through his own individual being. Human existence is full of possibilities. The aim of evolution is an integral unfolding of the divine within us. Sri Aurobindo set before mankind the ideal of the divine life, the spirit fulfilled on earth as the ultimate aim to be realised. Divine life means perfected life on earth — creation of a race of supermen. A perfect human world cannot be created of men who are themselves imperfect. The process of descent on earth can be expedited by spiritual activities, and more precisely by yoga. All the misery of the world is due to the separation of the finite from the infinite. Therefore, restoration of the original unity is the aim of yoga, according to Sri Aurobindo. Yoga is a spiritual discipline based on the concept that everything exists in God, besides Him nothing exists. Yoga helps in the transformation of mental being into the spiritual being. It is called integral yoga by Sri Aurobindo because the aim is to realise the integral unity of God, man and nature. As explained by Pitrim Sorokin, "The objective of integral yoga is not only and not so much a transcendental liberation of the individual, as it is the divinisation of the whole

embodied life and collective liberation of mankind" *(The Integral Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo,* p. 207).

Sri Aurobindo's concept of yoga demands cultivation of some special qualities. There is no importance of *Aasana, pranayama* and prayer as recommended by sage Patanjali, the founder of yoga philosophy. Yoga requires the spiritualisation of even the not-self. It means transformation of the physical into the spiritual. The aim of yoga is the emergence of divine life on earth, not liberation from life. It requires conscious effort to manifest divinity within us. Evolution has already reached a particular stage and yoga is needed to facilitate and expedite the further leap into the supramental stage.

We come across other original ideas of Sri Aurobindo in his views on rebirth and the law of *karma*. Rebirth, according to him, is an aspect of the general process of evolution. In the words of Prof. B.K. Lal, "Sri Aurobindo feels that the individual is a medium through which creation discloses itself. Therefore, the individual has to be given time and opportunity to grow. For this he has to assume a body. It is in this embodied state that the individual can do whatever he can do for expediting the next step of evolution. He must, therefore, be born and reborn till spiritual task is performed and the spiritual goal is reached. Birth is a necessary aspect of the growth of the individual towards spirituality" *(Contemporary Indian Philosophy).* Spiritual possibility is not exhausted in one birth and therefore, rebirth is necessary. As for the law of *karma* which is inseparably related with the concept of rebirth, Sri Aurobindo gave it a new interpretation. It cannot be accepted as the absolute and the only condition determining the world. *Karma* is one of the processes that the self uses for is evolution and transformation. The spirit within is not subjected to the *karmas* nor is it a slave in this life to its past actions. In the words of Sri Aurobindo, "If a certain amount of results of past *karma* is formulated in the present life, it must be with the consent of the psychic being which presides over the new formation of its earth's experience and assents not merely to an outward compulsory process, but to a secret will and guidance" *(Divine Life,* p. 720). Thus, an altogether new interpretation of rebirth and *karma* was given by Sri Aurobindo. Rebirth is not only a part of the evolutionary process but necessary for evolving into higher stages of evolution. However, it is not the result of past *karmas*.

Sri Aurobindo was very original even in his views on knowledge and ignorance. He did not accept the traditional Indian view that

ignorance is absence of knowledge. For Sri Aurobindo there is no opposition between the two as both are basically similar in nature. In fact there are degrees of knowledge. Our knowledge of the cosmos is not complete, and therefore, it may be called ignorance. Evolutionary process has reached the stage of mind and the mental stage may be called the stage of ignorance. According to Sri Aurobindo, "In fact what is happening is that ignorance is seeking and preparing to transform itself by a progressive illumination of its darkness into the knowledge that is already conceived in it." What we usually call ignorance is potential knowledge. It refers only to a stage in the process of development of knowledge. Sri Aurobindo has given seven kinds of ignorance which develop into seven kinds of knowledge. When we think that the objects and the temporal relations are real we reflect original ignorance. This shows our ignorance about the Absolute which is the source of all. Ignorance about the basic nature of cosmos is the second form of ignorance. Manifesting egoism when we think that the embodied existence is the real self, we manifest egoistic ignorance. Fourth is the temporal ignorance which implies ignorance about our eternal nature. When we give all importance to sense-experience we manifest the fifth kind of ignorance known as psychological ignorance. Then there is ignorance in the very constitution of our normal existence called constitutional ignorance. All these six forms of ignorance make our life a real mess and reduce it to practical ignorance. According to Sri Aurobindo, the ascent of our consciousness from it's sevenfold ignorance to seven kinds of knowledge will result in right attitude, right will and right action.

Sri Aurobindo also expressed his views on ethical, social and educational problems and made great contribution to the enrichment of contemporary Indian thinking. Besides philosophical writings, he has left rich literary legacy in the form of the epic poem *savitri*, the great symbolic work of philosophical character. Because of his tremendous output and originality, Sri Aurobindo has occupied a permanent place in the history of Indian philosophy.

Radhakrishnan

In Radhakrishnan we see the culmination of the idealist tradition of Indian philosophy, religion and culture. The philosophical thinking of Radhakrishnan was influenced by a number of factors of which Indian religious tradition, Advaita Vedanta philosophy and Hegelian absolute idealism were the most important. He was clearly against materialistic thinking and refuted materialistic or mechanical explanation of the world. The world expresses tremendous unity in its processes. There is an order, harmony and purpose of things and only an idealistic explanation can explain this. We cannot explain unity in variety unless we conceive that there is one ultimate reality. The supreme reality is conceived by Radhakrishnan as Absolute and God. Since God represents the reli-gious aspiration of common men, it should be accepted as the Absolute in action. About the reality of God, Radhakrishnan asserted that as long as the world is real, God is also real. One cannot doubt the reality of God while accepting the reality of creation.

Even as an idealist and traditionalist, Radhakrishnan maintained that while we recognise the spiritual nature of man we cannot consider the physical aspect as unreal. In fact man has finite as well as infinite aspects. The physical aspect does not contradict the existence of soul which represents his spiritual nature. In order to overcome the present state of restlessness in the world it is essential that we assert the importance of spiritual dimension in man. The true nature of man, as it is manifested by the soul, is the expression of Divinity. Within the framework of the Indian tradition, Radhakrishnan accepted the concepts of *karma*, rebirth and liberation. He endorsed the view that *karmas* in this life determined the next life after rebirth. A liberated man understands his real nature. The concept of *Jeevanmukta* or liberated-in-this-life particularly impressed Radhakrishnan as only a liberated could act for the redemption of mankind *(sarvamukti)*.

Radhakrishnan was deeply religious in his thinking and in his many lectures and writing, he explained what he meant by religion. He said, "religion is not a creed or a code but an insight into reality" *(My Search for Truth*, p. 27). Religion implies a discipline which transforms man's nature, and he develops an insight into his own true nature or his essence. Religion implies firm faith in the existence of God, the soul of man and absolute spiritual values. Talking about the nature of religious experience, Radhakrishnan said that it was an inner and personal experience undetermined by any external factor. It is an integral experience involving awareness of reality, indifference for worldly pleasures and sense of fullness. Fo this reason, religion according to Radhakrishnan, must contribute in the process of man's evolution into his divine stature. Besides this, religion has to develop the spirit of love, tolerance and universal brotherhood. Thus, a reli-gion which breeds narrowness, dogmatism, selfishness

and communalism must be abandoned.

Besides the fundamental problems of philosophy, Radhakrishnan expressed his views on culture, society, education and art. His approach was typical of a modern intellectual tempered with spiritualism. He stressed on the necessity of refinement in individual and social life and also on the need of collective effort for complete social transformation. Even during his period of active political life as Vice-President and President of India, Radhakrishnan warned mankind about the dangers of war, increasing materialism and mechanisation of human life. What is remarkable in his philosophy is the consistency of views with the basic Indian metaphysical thought. Originality of style and expression is the special feature of Radhakrishnan. For these reasons, his contribution to contemporary Indian philosophy is very significant.

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